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UK Statement for 12MSP Ottawa – International cooperation and assistance: Statement delivered by Richard Boden, Department for International Development (DFID)

President/Chair,

The UK is pleased to have this opportunity to restate its commitment to providing international cooperation and assistance to States contaminated by landmines. Whilst the UK recognises that mine action is primarily the responsibility of national authorities, and we support the leadership being shown by many States, it is clear that the extent of the landmine contamination problem means some countries do need support in meeting their Treaty obligations.

International cooperation and assistance are core obligations of this Convention and contribute to humanitarian and developmental aims. The UK puts great onus on, and prioritises the provision of, international cooperation and assistance that saves lives and promotes development.

Like many donors, the UK takes a comprehensive approach to mine action and does not differentiate between action on mines, explosive remnants of war and cluster munitions.

President/Chair

The UK's Mine action programme of assistance forms an important element of our broader commitment to reach the target of spending 0.7%



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of gross national income on Official Development Assistance (ODA) by 2013. Despite the difficult global economic climate, the UK remains firmly on track to meet this target.

Our approach to tackling demining is set out in the UK's Mine Action Strategy 2010-2013; "*Creating a safer environment: clearing landmines and other explosive remnants of war*", which is led by the Department for International Development (DFID). The aim of the Strategy is to link mine action with wider development initiatives - increasing the positive socio-economic and developmental impact of our work. The strategy also focuses on the need to assist governments in taking full responsibility for their National Mine Action Programmes and to improve value for money in mine action.

The UK is committed to spend over £41 million to support Mine Action from 2010-2013 in ten countries worldwide. The programme supports projects in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Laos, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Sudan, South Sudan and Vietnam. A further 5 year extension to the programme in Afghanistan is currently under consideration with a proposed start date of March 2013 and a budget of over £9m.

President/Chair

I would like to briefly describe some of the progress being made by the UK's implementing partners, MAG, HALO and the United Nations, in Mine Action.



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In just over 18 months the Mines Advisory Group has achieved excellent results through UK funding. In the six countries; Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, South Sudan, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, UK funding has:

- Returned 9 million m² of land to communities through clearance and release;
- Provided clearance, release and risk education messaging to more than a million beneficiaries (1,117,794 individuals);
- Destroyed more than 55,000 items of Explosive Remnants of War.

The HALO Trust, another key implementing partner of the UK's Mine Action programme, has demonstrated the importance of mine action in immediate post conflict situations. In Sri Lanka, through UK funding, HALO has cleared 68 minefields in just twelve months, destroyed and cleared over 14,000 anti-personnel mines – all of which has contributed to the return of over 70,000 internally displaced people.

In Mozambique HALO are working on particularly difficult terrain, land identified as high priority for clearance by the National Authorities. In 18 months the project has cleared over 820,000m² and located and destroyed 5,000 mines in farms and gardens.

The UK also funds the UN Voluntary Trust Fund to support important mine action in ten countries worldwide. The UK recognises the unique role the United Nations Mine Action Team plays in mine action, developing national institutions and providing Mine Risk Education.



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The UK believes that another important aspect of international cooperation and assistance is the ability to respond to new or emergency needs. In 2011, with the uprising in Libya, an urgent and critical need for Mine Action emerged. The UK moved quickly to provide funding to the Mine Action Group to carry out emergency survey, clearance and destruction in areas contaminated by explosive remnants of war including Misrata, Benghazi and other areas. A second grant supported MAG's further demining in the northern coastal region, western and eastern Libya. The UK is also supporting UNMAS's work in Libya. UNMAS are carrying out emergency mine clearance work and education projects and are supporting coordination of mine clearance in Libya. This work is helping to protect hundreds of thousands of people in Libya from explosive remnants of war. Total UK funding to Mine Action in Libya has exceeded £2million.

In addition, UK funding is supporting the Mine Action Group in the conflict affected areas of Somaliland, Puntland and South and Central Somalia, provided funding of up to £3million over the next two and a half years aimed at increasing security, prosperity and stability for men, women and children currently affected by the presence of explosive remnants of war (ERW), landmines and small arms and light weapons.



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President/Chair

The UK is fully committed to improving the quality of life for people affected by landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war. The UK believes that the needs of cluster munition and landmine victims are best met through increasing the coverage, equity, access and quality of health systems that support people with disabilities. We believe that this support should be non-discriminatory and should aim to improve capacity in a sustainable manner.

Recipients of the UK's health and disability support include many of the countries worst affected by landmine contamination. During 2010/11 the bilateral expenditure on health care to the landmine contaminated countries of: Cambodia, DRC, Mozambique, Sudan, Ethiopia, Nepal and Vietnam totalled £118.8 million or \$185.4 million.

President/Chair

The UK is fully committed to its duties of international cooperation and assistance and believes that through our mine action strategy we will be able to contribute to alleviating the appalling consequences of landmines, cluster munitions and EOD. The UK's mine action strategy prioritises work where it will have the greatest positive impact on communities' livelihoods and where it complements other development programmes.

We are currently undertaking an evaluation of our mine action strategy as we near the end of the current programming in 2013. The aim will be to



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ensure that the UK's mine action work is achieving maximum impact on improving livelihoods. The evaluation is due to conclude midway through 2013 and will inform our future strategy and funding on mine action. We will provide an update on the results and recommendations from this review at the Intercessional in June.

We look forward to continuing our work with state parties, UN agencies and implementing partners, towards achieving the aims of this Convention.