

## **Annual Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, November/December 2015**

### **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: Statement on International Cooperation and Assistance**

Thank you Mr President,

1. The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement of the European Union, and has some additional comments to make in a national capacity.
2. The United Kingdom is fully committed to improving the quality of life for people affected by anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war (ERW). The United Kingdom believes that needs are best met through the development of strong, accessible health systems and through support to people with disabilities. We committed to do this in the Cartagena Action Plan, and have maintained this support through the Maputo Action Plan. Health sector development remains the largest component of all basic services supported by UK aid.
3. In particular, the United Kingdom tackles the humanitarian threat posed by anti-personnel mines by surveying for, and clearing, all explosive remnants of war; delivering risk education; supporting the development of strong, accessible health systems; and building national governments' capacity to manage their own ordnance clearance activities.
4. The United Kingdom attaches a great deal of importance to gender-awareness in its mine action and explosive remnants of war programmes. To ensure our programmes benefit women, girls, men and boys we collect disaggregated data and use this to develop further our project design.
5. The United Kingdom does not discriminate against, or among, persons with disabilities, whether they be victims of anti-personnel mines, or any other explosive remnant of war, victims of armed conflict generally, or disabled through

illness, accident or other causes. Support should be non-discriminatory and should aim to improve capacity in a sustainable manner. This includes ensuring that development programmes adequately include disabled people throughout their design, delivery and monitoring.

6. The United Kingdom's Mine Action efforts have been a central component of its broader commitment to maintain the target of spending 0.7% of gross national income on Official Development Assistance (ODA). In 2014, the United Kingdom was one of the leading donors of Official Development Assistance of all OECD countries. From March 2014 to March 2015, the United Kingdom contributed £8.4 million to clearing all unexploded ordnance. The United Kingdom continues to believe that international cooperation and assistance should be directed principally towards those communities where mine action can save lives and promote development.
7. Over the last 18 months, the United Kingdom has funded projects in Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Iraq that have benefitted around 325,000 people. 8.5 million square meters of land have now been cleared. 7.9 million square meters of this land are already being used by beneficiaries. The United Kingdom has also reached 67,000 people through its mine risk education sessions and community liaison visits.
8. The United Kingdom would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mozambique on becoming mine-free. The United Kingdom was one of the largest contributors to mine clearance in Mozambique, contributing over £7 million since 2011 which funded the clearance of almost 1.4 million square meters of land directly benefitting the safety of up to 35,000 people.

Mr

President,

9. For many years, the United Kingdom has funded mine action programmes worldwide, especially in those areas still suffering from the effects of armed conflict. This goes to the heart of what our Convention is all about – tackling the suffering and casualties caused by mines, so that civilians can live their lives free

of

fear

and

risk.

Thank you