



Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

16th Meeting of States Parties

18-21 December 2017, Vienna

General Statement by MAG

(Check Against Delivery)

Mr President,

MAG aligns itself with the statement by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) as a proud founding member.

We add our voice in congratulating Sri Lanka on its accession and becoming the 163rd state party to the convention.

The Ottawa Treaty was ground-breaking and a landmark achievement of the last century. We should pause to consider on the success and impact of our collective work over the last two decades. This is a moment to reflect on the vision and courage of those whose actions, words and determination brought this Treaty into being.

The convention has saved millions of lives and limbs and ensured that the rights of survivors and their communities are upheld. The destruction of tens of millions of stockpiled mines has prevented untold future suffering. And the painstaking and meticulous clearance of contaminated land across five continents has freed hundreds of millions of people trapped from fear and returned rights denied by mine contamination.

By refusing to take no for an answer, the Ottawa Treaty changed the way things are done. It established a new type of partnership between NGOs and states – it made the world think and act differently. By putting people firmly above military considerations, the convention set the course for humanitarian disarmament. This legacy will extend far and wide.

MAG was set up three decades ago by remarkable individuals who put people first. My organisation is still fundamentally about people and that will not change. We are about rights. We stand for the marginalised. And we will not give up until we have finished what we started.

In 2014, you agreed to finish the job by 2025. That is only eight years away and the clock is ticking. And it is ticking loudly. As we look towards 2025, we still have a great deal to do. Every day we delay, 24 people will be killed or maimed and countless more spirits broken. Lives lost or changed for ever. Think of the 24 people closest to you. Or the 24 people sat around you here today. We must step up and work faster.

That is what the Landmine Free 2025 campaign is about. It is a call to action to donor and mine-affected states, non-governmental organisations and the public to reenergise support to landmine clearance. It is about our sector and the people we are working to support and not any individual organisations. For MAG, it means working harder, challenging ourselves, challenging others and striving for even closer partnership.

While it is fantastic to see global funding for mine action go up in response to the new landmine emergency in the Middle East and beyond, progress in many places lags behind. Mine action in Angola – a symbol of the convention’s hope – is on its knees. It is not time for excuses. It is a time to act. To be bold. To recommit funding and political will and make sure that no one affected by landmines is forgotten. It is time for this community to choose to achieve the possible and finish the job.

Mr President, Thomas,

To close, I would like to thank you on behalf of MAG for the role you have played from the start in delivering this Convention and its achievements. You were key to the development of its words just as you have played a central role in implementing them. You, like many in this room have lived its spirit. We commend you, thank you for your commitment and wish you every success in the week ahead.

Thank you.

ENDS