



Statement by Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

*Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
First International Pledging Conference, 2 March 2016, Geneva*

Madame President, Excellences, colleagues.

Thank you for the opportunity to add our voice of support to today's important initiative. MAG would like to add comments in support of the statements we have heard from our colleagues, and partners, NPA and DDG, as well as offer a few additional reflections.

Firstly we would like to offer our thanks our donors for the generous support we, and other NGO's receive to enable our work in support of Article 5 completion as well as wider collective efforts ongoing globally to clear cluster munitions, ERW and to support humanitarian response activity.

Today's commitments demonstrate the dedication that states have shown to mine action and it is vital that this continues. Funding and multi-year funding commitments, as exemplified by the UK, Netherlands and the United States, are vital.

The full potential of such pledges are realised when combined with political support at a national level, when international assistance works together to support outworking of best practice and when we as a sector are working in a spirit of transparent partnership, under the principle of national ownership.

It is crucial that as we walk 'the last stretch', that countries like Angola, DRC, and Sri Lanka, whose announcement today we warmly welcome, are supported to succeed and complete. If we turn our back on them now, then we are not being true to this Convention.

Sustained commitment needs to be matched with the guiding principles of operational efficiency and effectiveness. 'Clearing the Mines' provides a solid basis

for this, and identifies areas where we can work together to improve efficiency and effectiveness at the national level.

Broadly speaking, the mine action community has all of the operational tools and good practice it needs to succeed. But these tools are all-too-often not drawn on fully. Failure to fully embrace survey approaches, along with excessively risk-averse national standards are a major cause of inefficiency in mine action programmes.

Working collectively and transparently to address these challenges will enable us to maximise the impact of the generous pledges that have been made today, and give us the best possible opportunity to realise the commitment of the Maputo declaration. MAG stands ready to assist in walking the last stretch.

We thank you, Mr President.

ENDS