

-----CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY-----

Statement delivered by Ambassador Tobias Privitelli
Director, GICHD

Cooperation and Assistance

Fifth Review Conference of the APMBC
Siem Reap, Cambodia, 25-29 November 2024

Mr President

Excellencies,

The **Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining** remains a firm supporter of States Parties' efforts to fulfil their obligations under the Convention.

International cooperation and assistance are key enablers for fulfilling commitments under the Convention. Let me highlight five specific points on how to increase the impact of international cooperation and assistance on the ground:

First, we need to make full use of **existing cooperation and assistance tools**. Since the adoption of the Convention, a wealth of expertise, and practical tools have been developed, including mechanisms for coordination at national and international levels. In particular, **the Individualised Approach and National Mine Action Platforms** provide structured channels for States Parties to report progress, share challenges, communicate assistance needs and coordinate the role of stakeholders. Unfortunately, both have been underutilized. We welcome that these mechanisms are mentioned in the draft Siem Reap Action Plan and we encourage actively leveraging their potential.

Second, international cooperation and assistance cannot be efficient and sustainable without **strong national leadership**. Even well-coordinated international cooperation will not yield results without national partners to guide and strengthen these efforts. National authorities should be the driving force in making cooperation powerful tools for impactful change. In this regard, we greatly appreciate emphasis on localisation efforts in the new Action Plan and, in particular, Action #7 on channelling support through local organisations, where appropriate.

Third, **we should embrace a more balanced approach to international assistance**. Under the current prioritization, countries dealing with legacy contamination are often left behind in donors' attention, even when they are very close to completion. While it is essential to prioritize States facing urgent and large-scale contamination, we should not neglect the needs of others, especially if little is needed to support them in their last steps towards article 5 completion.

Activities relating to the time-bound obligations of the Convention receive more attention and funding than other essential mine action pillars, most notably risk education and victim assistance. We need to ensure predictable funding for these vital components of mine action, including those related to diversity considerations.

Fourth, there is a need for a **diversification of funding sources**. On this point, we welcome Action #40 of the Draft Action Plan on exploring all possible funding sources including conventional and innovative forms of funding. We also welcome that the draft Action Plan continues to emphasize the need to integrate mine action into broader sustainable development and humanitarian assistance efforts. The GICHD continues to be highly engaged to support these integration efforts.

Fifth, and final, we have to maintain and strengthen support for inclusive mine action implementation. The Oslo Action Plan has positively impacted gender equality, inclusion, and the effectiveness of mine action activities over the past five years, as set out in a Working Paper submitted by the Convention's Gender Focal Points. The GICHD supports the new draft Action Plan's emphasis on these principles.

Mr. President, Excellencies

Our Centre aims at contributing to a stronger impact of international cooperation and assistance three Regional Cooperation Programmes. They are targeting Arab- and French-speaking countries, as well as States from Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia. These programmes are platforms to exchange technical expertise, best practices, the latest standards and methodologies.

Since the last Review Conference, the GICHD has convened 19 Regional Cooperation workshops, trainings and other events, involving 32 States and focusing on subjects such as information management, technical and non-technical surveys, EORE, operational efficiency, quality management, global agendas, and inclusion.

In summary, full application of already existing tools, strong national leadership, a balanced approach in assistance allocation and greater diversification of funding sources are essential to make international cooperation more impactful.

The GICHD looks forward to strengthening cooperation with all of you and will continue supporting regional platforms for technical exchange.

Thank you.