

# Statement on International Cooperation and Assistance, 30 November 2009

**Delivered by Jacqueline Hansen, Landmine Monitor**

Madame President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The right to seek and receive assistance is the treaty obligation that facilitates all others; for many States Parties, without financial assistance and in-kind contributions stockpiles could not be destroyed, mines could not be removed from the ground, and survivors could not get the care they need. Both affected and non-affected States Parties should be commended for increasing their contributions to mine action. Affected states contributed \$108.7 million to mine action in 2008, up from \$50 million in 2005. Non-affected States Parties have contributed increasing assistance year after year-US\$219 million in 1999, \$392 million in 2004, and \$518 million in 2008.

And yet, these steady increases have not been enough. Each year some mine action programs struggle to obtain the necessary resources to carry out their activities, and some sectors, such as victim assistance, receive only a very small percentage of assistance.

The need for sustained and even increased funding will not diminish in the next five years. Article 5 extension requests approved in 2008 and those submitted in 2009 call for \$2.78 billion in funding to carry out activities through 2019. Projected costs for 2010-2014 average \$300 million per year for these states alone-58% of the total amount of international funding in 2008. States Parties who have not requested Article 5 extensions will also require sustained support to ensure they are able to meet their treaty obligations without requesting an extension. To ensure the treaty truly meets its promises to mine survivors donors should earmark increased funding for victim assistance.

States Parties have pointed out time and time again that international funds fall short of their needs. It is true that the needs are enormous and international funds finite. But there may be ways to improve the connection between the two, and the Cartagena Action Plan sets out many of them.

Affected States Parties, as outlined in Action #34 of the Cartagena Action Plan, must develop clear plans that outline their long-term needs. These plans must be specific and realistic, with annual targets that can be met and not moved every year to the frustration of donors and affected communities. Plans should clearly show national contributions-which should be increasing-as well as gaps needed to be filled through international assistance. Affected states need to include clearance and victim assistance in their national development plans and other strategies in order to ensure that funds can be accessed from donor development agencies.

Coordination of assistance is crucial to matching needs with resources, especially with the decreasing reliance on specific mine action budgets. Mine-affected States Parties need to ensure that mine action is included as a priority in strategies presented to donors. Donors should also internally coordinate funding strategies, by identifying funds from mine action budgets as well as from within development, humanitarian assistance, health, and other budget lines. States Parties must coordinate funding strategies with each other to ensure sufficient coverage of all mine action sectors, that all States Parties requiring assistance receive sufficient support, and to help identify and promote existing and new sources of financial and in-kind assistance to operators as well as to affected states.

The ICBL supports Zambia and others calling for a Standing Committee on Resources. This Committee will provide a forum to exchange ideas, strengthen cooperation between donors and affected states, help to ensure coherence between funding strategies, discuss how best to use scarce resources most efficiently, and facilitate the mobilization of funds needed to meet mine action needs.

Donors' traditionally short-term approach to mine action prevents effective planning and operations in mine-affected states. Mine action programs often do not know from year to year if they will be able to continue to carry out their activities. Donors should therefore provide long-term funding to programs, as outlined in Action #38 of the Cartagena Action Plan, to enable them to develop and implement long-term plans. We propose that

donor states go beyond a year-to-year approach and make a commitment to partner with mine-affected States Parties until they meet their treaty obligations, as happened in Albania, where the ITF supported Albania through its completion of Article 5 obligations. Donors must also continue to support affected states even after clearance has been completed, as noted in Action #39, since victim assistance needs are ongoing.

Action #49 of the Cartagena Action Plan calls on States Parties to promote the inclusion of mine action activities in development programs. Using development funds for mine action is a useful way to leverage existing funding, but should be done with some caution. For example, States Parties are required under Article 5 to clear all known or suspected mined areas, even when there is no clear link to development priorities. We encourage States Parties to maintain a specific budget line for mine action to support such clearance. Keeping a specific budget for mine action will also provide donors with the flexibility to respond to humanitarian emergencies as they arise.

The impact of integrating mine action into development budgets is unknown. We do not know, for example, how much development funding has been spent on victim assistance. We do not know if mine action is losing out when managed by those unfamiliar with the treaty's legal obligations. The integration of mine action into development budgets makes it increasingly difficult to track funding specifically for mine action, and States Parties are encouraged to fully implement Action #54 of the Cartagena Action Plan and provide accurate, updated, and complete reporting including on financial and in-kind assistance.

Let us not forget that international cooperation is a legal obligation, and this obligation is not lessened with the passing years. Many states are in a position to contribute funds, technical expertise, or materials, and these contributions are at the center of ensuring the international community can live up to the treaty's promises. We congratulate Australia on its recent announcement to commit A\$100 million over five years to mine action, and we hope that other donors will use this historic Summit as an opportunity to announce long-term funding strategies. We look forward to hearing more about new commitments to international cooperation and assistance this week.

Thank you.