

**Statement by the Drumlanrig Group**  
**Mine Action Support Group (MASG) Meeting**  
**10 April 2025**

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you, Ambassador, for the opportunity to say a few words in today's MASG meeting. As the Chair of the Drumlanrig Group I'm delivering this statement on behalf of the following agencies, DCA, DRC, the GICHD, HI, MAG and NPA.

Our sector is experiencing a fundamental change in its funding landscape, at a time of unprecedented needs. We are deeply concerned by the many ongoing conflict and crisis in the world where the civilian population are under constant threat of landmines and other explosive weapons. The ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, the developing situations in countries like Syria, Sudan and Myanmar, the needs in Gaza and West Bank which are being compounded by concern for humanitarian space, and the significant increase in contamination in Lebanon following the escalation in late 2024, are all examples of how the humanitarian needs for mine action is as much required as ever. In addition to land release, victim assistance, risk education and CPP are urgently needed for civilians and affected communities.

Global humanitarian budgets are facing mounting pressure. The US decision to agree waivers for most of the countries affected by the Foreign Assistance stop order is good news, however the uncertainties for stable funding in the future remains. We see how several institutional donors are reducing their aid budgets, even by states that have historically been champions of the APMBC and strong supporters of mine action. These funding reductions are occurring at a time when international norms are under increasing pressure, and some states are openly questioning or even withdrawing from ABMBC and CCM.

This erosion of long-standing commitments threatens to reverse decades of progress and undermines the broader international rules-based system. It is precisely in such moments of global instability and growing humanitarian need that principled, sustained engagement—including financial support—is most vital. Mine action is not only about clearance; it is a reaffirmation of core humanitarian principles, a contribution to human security, and an investment in stability, recovery, and development. It is our collective duty to safeguard, promote and implement these life-saving treaties.

We therefore welcome the recent British decision to extend their Global Mine Action Programme by a year, despite broader cuts to ODA. The long-term value of consistency in support from donors can not be underestimated. Funding to our sector should be viewed as a critical and highly affordable stabilization mechanism as well as a humanitarian tool providing access to humanitarian responders, provide socio-economic development, rebuild societies and provides safe communities.

The changes in the funding landscape and the challenges we are facing have created a great deal of uncertainty and put the sector in a situation that requires us to adapt and work together in a more efficient and effective way. Coordination of donor funding is more important than ever, and will continue to be in the coming years. Exploring new mechanisms that can open up additional funding sources will be crucial. The Siem Reap Angkor Action Plan's commitment to explore the feasibility to establish a Voluntary Trust Fund is one such initiative that can support States Parties who struggle to

secure financial assistance for their Article 5 implementation. The establishment of the fund would not only address Article 5 implementation and compliance, but it would diversify the donor pool, enabling States Parties otherwise unable to support, to make smaller contributions. Most funding goes to a relatively limited number of affected countries, while other affected States Parties with lesser contamination, sometimes dating back decades, receive close to nothing or far from sufficient funding to implement their treaty obligations. Chad and Senegal are two such examples, but the list is long.

It is not only essential that donors coordinate among themselves regarding the countries they intend to support—so that affected states with comparatively lower levels of remaining contamination are not forgotten—but it is equally imperative that coordination takes place when multiple donors focus on a single country. This is particularly relevant in contexts such as Syria, where there may be increased potential to engage in mine action activities since the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2024. Especially, in the absence of a national mine action authority, it becomes critical for donors to jointly gather and share information concerning the capacities, access constraints, and funding needs of relevant mine action actors operating within the country.

We also note with concern that advocacy work—an essential pillar of mine action—is increasingly deprioritized. Yet, without sustained advocacy, the political will to support mine action weakens, global norms risk erosion, and the voices of affected communities are too easily silenced. Continued investment in advocacy is vital to ensure that mine action efforts remain politically prioritized, adequately funded, and capable of achieving their humanitarian and legal objectives.

This include to keep a strong focus on cross-cutting issues such as gender and diversity and environment and climate change. Last year's adoption of the revised IMAS 07.13 on environmental management and climate change in mine action is crucial component to ensure we do our part to mitigate the impact from our land release work. Gender and diversity are another area that we need to continue our commitment to, as it represents a key to ensure we reach out to not just some, but to all those affected.

We look forward to continued and strengthened collaboration with MASG members and with other partners in the sector, in a time where it is more needed than ever, to work towards our shared goal of protecting civilians.

Thank you.