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Statement by Ms Greta Zeender

Head of External Relations, Policy & Cooperation Programmes, GICHD

“Matters related to the mandate of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance”

APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18-20 June 2024

Mr. Chair,

The Oslo Action Plan provided a solid and comprehensive framework to enhance cooperation and assistance under the APMBC. However, the extent to which the OAP commitments have succeeded in increasing international assistance or promoting greater coordination among stakeholders is unclear.

As shown in successive Landmine Monitor reports, funding for mine action remains low compared to other areas of international assistance and so far insufficient to support countries with outstanding APMBC obligations, especially on clearance. International assistance also remains unevenly distributed, prioritizing countries in humanitarian emergencies and clearance over other mine action pillars such as victim assistance, risk education and advocacy. While understandable, this practice has made it challenging for resource scarce countries in non-emergency contexts to deploy the necessary capacities to address new or legacy contamination.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference can enhance cooperation and assistance meaningfully, both by strengthening existing mechanisms and by encouraging the exploration of new ones.

The individualized approach, which helps affected countries to showcase their progress and outstanding challenges and to promote coordination, seems to have been underutilized. Follow-up to these meetings has also not been consistent, which means that this has not always led to greater coordination or more financial resources in support of countries' progress towards completion. Encouraging more affected States to use this mechanism and investing more in the follow-up process, especially at the national level, could help strengthen this established channel for support.

The GICHD welcomes the intention of the APMBC committees on article 5 and on cooperation and assistance to work more closely to facilitate the “matching” of needs with international

resources. We believe that enhancing dialogue between the APMBC implementation machinery and informal mechanisms for donor coordination, such as the Mine Action Support Group, could also help meet the financial needs of countries with outstanding Convention obligations.

Since 2019, the sector has focused on the potential of innovative financing mechanisms in filling the funding gap. A recent study by GICHD and Symbio Impact Ltd analyses how innovative finance mechanisms, notably front-loading mechanisms, which make public funds available through the issuance of bonds that are later repaid through committed funding, and thematic bonds, have been successfully employed in other humanitarian aid and development assistance sectors and explains how such mechanisms may be applied to mine action.

Finally, the creation of a “completion fund”, as suggested by some States and civil society organizations, could also be usefully explored. Looking at how similar models have been applied in other treaties, such as the Voluntary Trust Fund of the Arms Trade Treaty, could provide useful insights into what has or has not worked, including in terms of institutional set up and processes to manage and allocate contributions.

Mr. Chair,

In addition to financial contributions, the exchange of knowledge, good practices and experience among States facing similar realities are greatly beneficial towards effective and efficient mine action. Through its three Regional Cooperation Programmes, targeting Arab-speaking and French-speaking regions as well as Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, the GICHD has been enhancing local capacities through the dissemination of tools and standards into local languages, training programmes and thematic workshops, including on gender and diversity mainstreaming, information management, addressing risks posed by IEDs and EORE.

In closing, let us renew the commitment to supporting all affected areas, ensuring that no individual or community is left behind in our collective efforts to achieve a mine-free world. The GICHD looks forward to continuing cooperation with partners at all levels to support the full implementation of the Convention.

Thank you.