

## ICBL-MAC Statement - Clearance

Thank you Chair. As a Mine Action Fellow from the United States and Denmark working for a Danish demining NGO, I am pleased to take the floor on behalf of my peers around the world and Mines Action Canada.

For hundreds of thousands of people clearance has been way too slow - every day of delay in clearing contaminated land is one more day people stay displaced or unable to access their land. It is one more day that they have to choose between safety and making an income.

Missing a deadline and getting an extension is a somewhat abstract process for many of us in this room. It means new work plans and a strong extension request - paperwork - but for communities on the ground, a missed deadline means another year of people being forced from their homes, unable to return to their communities and unable to walk safely.

My work and my participation in the Mine Action Fellows program have allowed me to connect with peers from affected communities. Some of them have been waiting their whole lives to enjoy the freedom to step off the path and explore without fear.

We are two years away from the aspirational 2025 goal. It is clear that many states are not going to meet this target. That should be a wake-up call for the whole mine action community. States have not matched their legal obligations and political commitments with action and funding on the ground. The Landmine Monitor reported a 7% decrease in global mine action funding last year.

Over the last years we have seen how diversion of aid affects the most vulnerable and marginalised communities. Let's not forget funding for programmes where issues of explosive ordnance contamination persists. Such as Afghanistan, Libya and South Sudan.

I want to see a mine free world in my lifetime but for that to happen, things need to change.

All states need to step up. Affected states need functional survey, realistic work plans and political will;

Donor states also need political will and to increase funding for clearance activities. Remember, the Monitor reported that nine mine-affected States Parties did not receive external support to carry out clearance and/or risk education projects in 2021.

States that are not affected and cannot provide financial support -look to other forms of cooperation like sharing research.

Getting the mines out of the ground is going to need all of us working together.

How long do my friends living in fear of mines have to wait?

I will now turn the floor over to Maria to address risk education....

Thank you.