Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

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Consideration of the general status and operation of the Convention
Destruction of anti-personnel mines in mined areas
Report on the progress made to explore the feasibility of establishing a voluntary trust fund

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Progress Report: Explore the feasibility of establishing a voluntary trust fund" *, **

Submitted by the VTF Working Group (Algeria, Colombia, Japan, (Observer), the Netherlands, Norway (Chair), Switzerland and Zambia (Observer))

1. At the Fifth Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (the Convention) which took place on 25-29 November 2025 in Siem Reap, Cambodia, the States Parties invited the President to establish a Working Group tasked with implementing Action 44 of the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan (SRAAP). Action 44 commits States Parties to "explore the feasibility of establishing a voluntary trust fund to support affected States Parties struggling to secure international assistance for their legal and time-bound commitments under Article 5 of the Convention, with a view to reporting on the progress made to the Twenty-Second Meeting of the States Parties and to taking a decision thereon by no later than the Twenty-Third Meeting of the States Parties".

2. Following the Fifth Review Conference, the President established a Working Group which is chaired by Norway and includes representatives from Algeria, Colombia, the Netherlands, and Switzerland as well as a representative of Japan and Zambia, as current and President-designate, respectively, participating as observers.

3. This progress report sets out to answer the following questions:

(a) What are the gaps in the current funding landscape?

(b) How should the identified gaps be addressed?

(c) What are the possible objectives and scope of a potential voluntary trust fund (VTF)?

(d) How could a VTF be structured and governed to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and accountability?

(e) What criteria and processes will be used to select projects and monitor their implementation?

* The present document was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent information.
** The present document is being issued without formal editing.

Identifying gaps

4. Currently, 35 States Parties are actively engaged in fulfilling their obligations under Article 5[1] of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which requires a State Party to identify and address all known and suspected mined areas under their jurisdiction or control, exclude civilians from these areas, and ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control, as soon as possible. While progress has been made, many States Parties have reported facing significant challenges associated with limited national and international resources for implementation of their Article 5 obligations. As a result, several States Parties have had to make use of the extension request mechanism provided under Article 5.3 of the Convention, in accordance with its provisions, to ensure the continued implementation of their Article 5 obligations.

5. At present, several of the 35 States Parties implementing Article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention are not among the primary recipients of international mine action funding. Despite efforts to mobilize resources, these States have struggled to secure the necessary financial support to advance their survey and clearance operations towards completion. Considering the requirements for support expressed by affected States Parties, with a view to leaving no State Party behind, and considering that no funding mechanism was identified by the group which addresses this specific gap in implementation, the establishment of a VTF could offer an opportunity to pool resources and provide targeted assistance. Such a mechanism could support these States Parties in making meaningful progress towards the completion of their Article 5 obligations, including, where possible, completion within a short to medium-term (1–5 years), thereby contributing to the overall goals of the Convention.

Leaving no one behind: Support for Article 5 Implementation

6. Cooperation and assistance are critical elements for implementing the Convention. Building on this, this progress report explores the feasibility of establishing a VTF to support States Parties in fulfilling their Article 5 obligations. In developing this progress report, the Working Group employed a multi-pronged approach.

7. Central to this process were structured consultations with representatives of existing voluntary trust funds, in particular the Arms Trade Treaty VTF (ATT VTF), the UNMAS VTF, and the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR). These engagements provided valuable insights into the operational models, governance structures, funding mechanisms, and lessons learned from comparable trust fund initiatives. The study also examined the administrative and financial frameworks of these funds to assess their relevance and adaptability to the specific needs of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

8. In parallel, the VTF Working Group, convened a series of deliberative sessions to evaluate the strategic, legal, and practical dimensions of establishing such a fund. These discussions focused on identifying gaps in the funding landscape, ensuring transparency and accountability in fund management, and ensuring that the fund's objectives respond to the Convention's humanitarian goals. The VTF Working Group also considered the importance of maintaining national ownership and sustainability of mine action programs. The combined insights from external consultations, including an open session held on 22 September 2025, to which all States Parties and organizations were invited to participate, and internal deliberations, formed the basis for assessing the viability, structure, and potential impact of a dedicated VTF under the Convention.

[1] Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Peru, Senegal, Serbia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkyie, Ukriane, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

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Possible objectives and structure of the VTF

9. During its consultations and deliberations, the Working Group found that a potential VTF could be structured based on the model of the Arms Trade Treaty Voluntary Trust Fund (ATT VTF).

10. The objective of a VTF should be to establish a sustainable funding mechanism dedicated to supporting States Parties struggling to mobilize financial resources to achieve their obligation under Article 5 of the Convention. This fund will not be an alternative or duplicate existing or future funding mechanisms.

11. The VTF should ensure an equitable and effective support to States Parties that are struggling to secure assistance through existing channels. By pooling voluntary contributions, the VTF can maximize the impact with limited resources and help ensure that Article 5 obligations are met. The main aim of a possible VTF should be "leaving no one behind".

12. The establishment of a VTF could demonstrate renewed donor commitment and adaptability within the Convention community, reinforcing the Convention's credibility and humanitarian objectives at a time when innovation and focused support are most needed.

13. Terms of Reference (ToR) would be developed to provide clear guidance regarding the practical functioning of the fund as well the role of the Convention's Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and the Fund's Selection Committee. Detailed working methods for a Selection Committee would also need to be drafted to ensure its successful deliberations, including addressing matters related to conflicts of interest. The Working Group suggests the following to serve as an outline for possible future ToRs. The establishment of the VTF could be guided by the following principles:

(a) The VTF will not serve as an alternative to other funding mechanisms. The VTF will take into consideration the existing initiatives and projects of other funding mechanisms to avoid all duplication;

(b) Ensuring that the VTF remains lean and efficient; and

(c) Ensuring that all the processes within the VTF are State Party-led.

14. Primary objective: Assisting States Parties that are struggling to mobilize financial and in-kind support for the implementation of their survey and clearance obligations under Article 5.

15. Scope: The VTF is intended to provide targeted support to States Parties that receive little to no international bilateral or multilateral financial assistance and have limited national means (Least Developed Countries (LDCs)) to implement their survey and clearance provisions under Article 5 of the Convention. The VTF will support States Parties that are likely to reach completion within a short to medium timeframe (1-5 years) should they receive targeted funding support.

16. A VTF could also provide support to measures that can significantly accelerate expected completion of Article 5 obligations in States Parties with prolonged difficulties in achieving completion, that have showed clear efforts in this regard.

17. The VTF will not support long-term operational costs, infrastructure development, or activities already covered by other funding mechanisms.

Possible structure

18. The Working Group discussed what a possible structure for the VTF could be. The content below is intended solely as an illustrative example, based on ongoing consultations and deliberations. The details provided on management, application, selection, financing, functioning, monitoring and evaluation are subject to further refinement as the feasibility study progresses.

19. The ISU could manage the VTF. The ISU would handle daily fund management, which would require the hiring of a dedicated program officer for project assessments, reporting, and monitoring. Project selection would be overseen by a geographically diverse

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Selection Committee of 5–10 States Parties, possibly with one member of the Article 5 Committee and the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance participating as observers.

20. Only States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, in partnership with implementing organizations, could apply for support. Applications should provide detailed project objectives, methodologies, partner qualifications, budgets, and timelines. The selection process of projects submitted for financing should include consultations with relevant committees and expert scrutiny to ensure projects have specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound objectives.

21. Selection should give priority to States Parties with little or no bilateral funding and projects likely to enable completion of Article 5 obligations within a short to medium timeframe (1–5 years). Annual transparency reports are required from applying States Parties in line with their obligations under Article 7. Financial contributions will be welcomed from various sources, but potential conflicts of interest for contributions from private donors will need to be managed. The ISU would ensure transparent grant management and public reporting and coordinate monitoring and evaluation with all staffing and administrative costs to be covered by contributions to the VTF.

Summary and Outlook

22. In light of the increasingly challenging funding landscape, the establishment of a VTF under the framework of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention could serve as a clear signal of renewed donor commitment to the Convention. This would not only support national implementation efforts but also reinforce the Convention's effectiveness, credibility, and results-oriented approach as well as its overall universalization efforts.

23. In the course of its work, the Working Group has reviewed existing funding mechanisms and alternative options for supporting States Parties in the implementation of their survey and clearance obligations under Article 5 of the Convention. Despite these efforts, the Working Group has not identified any other funding mechanisms that sufficiently address the specific needs of States Parties that receive little to no international bilateral or multilateral financial assistance and have limited national means, particularly Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

24. This persistent gap highlights the importance of establishing a dedicated and targeted funding mechanism to ensure that all States Parties can fulfil their Article 5 commitments in a timely and effective manner, in line with the humanitarian objectives and spirit of the Convention.

25. Our finding thus far is that not establishing a Voluntary Trust Fund would likely perpetuate existing funding gaps, increase reliance on deadline extensions, and risk leaving some States Parties behind. It could also weaken donor engagement and the Convention's credibility, making it harder to achieve universal and timely implementation of Article 5 obligations.

26. Since the commencement of this feasibility study, the funding landscape relevant to the implementation of Article 5 has continued to evolve. The Working Group recognizes that these changes may influence both the needs of affected States Parties and the range of available solutions and financing. As a result, it will be necessary for the Working Group to further clarify that the identified gap will not be covered by other funding mechanisms and whether the establishment of the VTF is the best way to contribute towards closing this gap.

27. In addition, the Working Group will need to continue its work on several key issues, including the development of possible Terms of Reference for a new fund, as well as robust frameworks for accountability, monitoring, and evaluation. Addressing these questions will be essential to ensure that any future mechanism is both effective and responsive to the needs of States Parties with limited access to existing funding channels.

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