

H.E. António Guterres
Secretary General
United Nations
New York, NY 10017

16th March 2022

COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)

Period covered: 16 March 2020 - 16 March 2022

Dear Secretary General,

I am pleased to reaffirm MAG's support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption, as outlined in the UN global compact.

As a leading international humanitarian mine action organisation with a diverse workforce of over 5,500 staff working across 27 countries, MAG acknowledges the impact we can have on communities around the world and the importance of working in line with humanitarian principles and the ten principles of the United Nations Global Compact.

In the two-year period since our last update, MAG has destroyed over 183,000 landmines and explosive remnants of war making communities safer and releasing almost 146 million square metres of contaminated land for productive use, such as agriculture or other livelihoods and development activities. Our work makes a clear contribution to the progress towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 1: No Poverty, SDG 2: Zero Hunger and SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. In addition, MAG's work to secure small arms and light weapons and ammunition and destroying surplus or obsolete weapons contributes to reduction of violence and more peaceful societies, in line with SDG 16.

Following a consultative process MAG launched its new set of values in March 2022– Determined, Inclusive, Expert, Integrity, Compassion, across the organisation, which reflect many of the 10 principles. Throughout the rest of the year, MAG intends to embed these values into all aspects of organisational life including appraisal principals and inhouse training.

In this Communication of Engagement, we reassert our pledge to keep supporting the Global Compact advancing these principles and make a clear statement of this commitment to our stakeholders, partners, supporters and general public. In addition, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles in the last two years.

Human Rights

Communities are at the heart of everything MAG does, and we are determined to deliver a safe future for the women, men, girls and boys affected by violence, conflict and insecurity. We believe in a world where people can exist with dignity and choice, where their human rights are upheld and where they can live free from the fear from landmines, explosive remnants of war and the impact of small arms and light weapons and ammunition. In 2021, MAG's work benefitted over 1.56 million people around the world.

As co-founder of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), MAG was co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 for the advocacy work which led to the adoption of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. MAG continues to be a strong and vocal advocate for the full implementation of this Convention and other humanitarian disarmament instruments, such as the Convention on Cluster Munitions, both directly and as an active member of the Landmine Free 2025 Campaign. In 2019, MAG also joined the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW), a network of NGOs calling for immediate action to prevent human suffering from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. In the second quarter of 2021 MAG joined the coordination group on SALW and Gender (GENSAC). MAG uses the language of human rights and human rights-based approaches in our policies and programming, placing people affected by armed conflict and violence at the core of our work.

In line with our commitment to humanitarian principles, MAG integrates gender-sensitivity as part of the human rights-based approach to ensure the inclusion of women, girls, boys and men in all sections of society, supporting human rights in the community and workplace, in line with principle 1. Our commitment to gender also features in our strategic plan (objective 2.2) to ensure that the experiences and concerns of women, girls, boys and man, as well as people living with disabilities are an integral dimension of the design and implementation of MAG's programming and operations globally. This approach helps MAG to better understand the causes and types of inequities and human rights violations and, hence, the measures required for mitigation, prevention, and protection.

Labour

Through MAG's Equal Opportunities Policy, we make a clear commitment that we are opposed to all forms of discrimination and value equality in the workplace. We are committed to equal opportunities in employment regardless of marital status, gender, sexual orientation, disability, colour, race, religion or belief, nationality, ethnicity, or age, actively supporting principle 6.

The policy sets out MAG's position on equal opportunities in all aspects of MAG's work and it is applied to all MAG employees, including all aspects of programme management (e.g., design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation) and employment (e.g., recruitment, promotion and training), this is reflected by our diverse national and international teams across the organisation, with staff from over 60 different nationalities working across MAG.

MAG is committed to giving everyone an equal chance to work, learn, contribute, and live free from discrimination, harassment, and prejudice. We are embarking on an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) work plan that allows for diverse voices across the organisation to be heard and for all staff to have access to skills development training. We will also identify organisational initiatives that support diversity across our work and will adjust our practice, behaviour and policy accordingly. We are not just talking about EDI, we have committed resources to it through the appointment of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Manager to facilitate and drive our work forward in this area.

In addition, MAG also has a robust employment framework that is compliant with national labour legislation in each of the countries that we operate. The framework aims to uphold the principles of fairness, duty of care and being a 'good employer.' We continue to strengthen our safeguarding framework and apply organisational learning to improve our culture and practices. Our Policy on Personal Conduct clearly sets out the standards of behaviour that are expected of all employees. We have clear and robust processes that allow for the reporting of issues or concerns in confidence, and we commit to responding to these reports in a timely and thorough manner. Over the last three years, following the ongoing safeguarding policy reviews, we now have in place an organisational Safeguarding Lead, a Safeguarding Manager and Safeguarding Co-ordinator and a Safeguarding Trustee Focal Point. MAG has also established Safeguarding Units in our Iraq and Sri Lanka Programmes and focal points in other programmes. Our safeguarding work is supported by a strong set of HR policies and toolkits including inductions, whistleblowing procedures, grievance and disciplinary policies and personal development appraisals.

MAG is compliant with the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015. [MAG's 2021 Modern Slavery statement](#) is published on our website, reinforcing our commitment to Principle 4. This statement is reviewed annually and approved by our Board of Trustees.

Environment

MAG is committed to being responsive to the environmental impact of our work and identifying opportunities to reduce our negative impact on the planet, and this commitment is incorporated under Aim 2 of our Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

At an organisational level, MAG seeks to reduce its impact on the environment by working in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner and is committed to continual improvement of its environmental performance through compliance with ISO 14001:2015 (Environmental Management Systems) and all relevant environmental legislation. MAG successfully recertificated the ISO 14001:2015 and ISO 9001:2015 (Quality Management Systems) accreditations in 2021, following an external audit.

MAG has 119 UK affiliated staff at our UK office in Manchester and we have set out three clear environmental objectives to: maintain same levels of fossil-fuel use from staff business travel; maintain energy used in the HQ building; and to maintain consumption of paper procured, and printed materials procured. All three objectives were achieved over the last two years, as MAG reduced CO₂ travel emissions by 65%, reduced energy emissions in the UK office by 47%, and printed paper usage reduced by 59%. Our waste emissions during the same period reduced by 82%. Although Covid-19 was a contributory factor during this period, we are committed to continue mapping our carbon footprint each year so that we can better understand the impact of our activities on the environment.

MAG also participates in the Environmental Issues and Mine Action (EIMA) Working Group. During the last quarter of 2021, MAG provided examples, photos and input into a report by [Mine Action Review on Mitigating the Environmental Impacts of Explosive Ordnance and Land Release](#).

In our programmes, MAG has taken measures to promote environmental responsibility and sustainability. For instance, our Syria programme uses in-house water cleaning systems for all non-potable water, reducing plastic consumption. The programme has also designed and procured more durable Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) materials such as bags and booklets for children. This reduces disposable, one time use paper waste, while also benefitting communities with retention of EORE messages.

The destruction of explosive items and other conventional weapons is a vital activity to enable vulnerable populations to live safer and more secure lives. MAG seeks ways to mitigate the negative consequences that the destruction of weapons and ammunition can have on the environment. For example, in early 2021, MAG Ecuador disposed of 19.6 tons of a highly flammable chemical used in incendiary bombs. These bombs are designed for military use however they have been linked to use against civilian populations causing severe burns. The chemical infiltration of the soil or severe air pollution caused by a long-burning fire also present significant risks to the environment. The MAG Ecuador team were able to use an environmentally friendly technique of neutralisation to reduce the hazardous nature of the chemical, its environmental impact and the process prevented environmental contamination.

In West Africa an assessment is being carried out to explore ways of reducing and/or eliminating the toxic fumes which are emitted in the process of ammunition destruction, through the use of technology that recycles and cleans the emissions. This demonstrates our commitment to principle 9, to encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Landscapes contaminated with explosive remnants of war can exacerbate the human, environmental and socio-economic impact of climate change, and hinders the response against it. In forested areas explosive incidents can cause or be triggered by the spread of wildfire. It is not only the immediate impact of fires that can be extremely detrimental to the environment, but the long-term consequences include loss of fertile land as a result of intensive soil erosion caused by floods and landslides. Landmine and other explosive ordnance contamination also hinders the implementation of environmental remediation measures, such as revegetation and agroforestry interventions that aim to prevent erosion, sequester carbon and increase biodiversity.

To address the increasing visible threat of climate change, and with 65% of the total suspected hazardous areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) forested areas, MAG BiH has advocated for some of the Mine Suspected Areas vulnerable to wildfires and landslides to be promoted to high priority for clearance. To further undertake greater environmental responsibility and to support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges under principle 7 and 8, MAG BiH also coordinates to gather information on protected tree species in mine suspected areas cleared by MAG informing the Mine Action Authorities in country and follows the policy of not cutting down mature trees.

Furthermore, the 2019-2021 period saw a notable reduction in CO₂ travel emissions. As our country programmes adapted to the Covid disruption there were an increased number of remote activities. For example, trainings and mentoring for security forces in areas such as weapons marking were conducted remotely. As restrictions in many countries eased, MAG continued to undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility to reduce the organisation's carbon footprint under principle 8, by for example car-pooling to transport its field staff in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Across MAG programmes, we continue to make the transition to digital data collection using mobile devices where possible, to reduce the amount of paper used and reduce data input error that, in turn, will reduce the need to re-check information and therefore reduce travel in the field and the resulting carbon footprint.

In pursuit of our lifesaving work to clear landmine and explosive remnants of war we are mindful of the unintended consequences that this may have on the environment. Our programmes undertake risk assessments to ensure minimal harm to the natural environment as well as considering the potential impacts to items of cultural or indigenous significance as a result of our operations.

MAG is looking to expand many of these measures to more programmes in a continuous effort to mitigate the environmental impact of our operations.

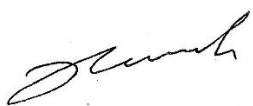
Anticorruption

MAG has conducted programme activities in 29 different countries in the last two years. Of those 29 countries, 26 are rated as having a score of 39 or less according to the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index. This clearly shows the difficult and challenging context we face whilst striving to achieve our humanitarian mission.

Despite the risks of bribery and corruption, we tackle the issue head on and MAG is committed to a 'zero tolerance' culture across the organisation in which all forms of financial misconduct are clearly viewed as unacceptable. MAG has a strong range of policies and internal controls that provide a clear framework to address the risks that we face. These include a Financial Crime and Misconduct Policy, Finance Manual, Whistleblowing Policy and a Code of Conduct, all of which are applied to MAG employees and, as far as is appropriate, MAG's partners as well. MAG's framework to minimise and address corruption focuses on four areas, namely awareness, prevention, reporting and responding, all of which ensure appropriate and efficient application of MAG's resources. MAG has a rigorous and robust arrangement for reporting and acting on serious incidents, including those where corruption or fraudulent activity may have occurred.

MAG continuously monitors its impact and ensures it is accountable and transparent. To keep our donors, partners and stakeholders informed of our operations, we share the difference we make every year in our annual reports and our website.

Sincerely yours,



Darren Cormack
Chief Executive, MAG
att: ANNUAL REVIEW