

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

29th April 2024

COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)

Period covered: 16 March 2022 - 16 March 2024

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.

Who we are:

MAG is a humanitarian, development and peacebuilding organisation that limits the causes and addresses the consequences — both immediate and long-term — of conflict and armed violence. MAG has a diverse workforce of over 6,000 staff working across more than 30 countries, 95% of whom are nationals of the countries where we work. 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.

Our work saves lives, eases suffering, protects human rights and contributes to sustainable peace for the hundreds of millions of people affected. It fosters stable and secure societies and is a key enabler of progress towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, in particular the sustainable development goals (SDGs):

- SDG 1: No Poverty;
- SDG 2: Zero Hunger;
- SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

Evidence based research demonstrating the contribution of humanitarian mine action to SDG 2 has been carried out by MAG¹ which highlights the cumulative effects of the HMA sector in strengthening local and regional food systems and reinforcing community resilience, supporting progress towards the zero-hunger sustainable development goal. MAG has contributed to SDG 16 through its Humanitarian Mine Clearance work², by releasing almost 161 million square metres of contaminated land for productive use, such as agriculture or other livelihoods and development activities. Further MAG has provided 56,873 Explosive Ordinance Risk Education sessions to 817,949 community members globally. To date this work has benefited over 1.3 million women, girls, men and boys. Through MAG's Armed Violence Reduction work it has marked over 10,000 weapons and destroyed over 16,000 small arms and light weapons³.

At the end of 2023 MAG finalised its new strategic direction⁴ which is designed to hold MAG to account and to bind our staff, donors and partners together in common purpose as we navigate an increasingly complex and changeable world. The strategic direction provides a framework for our decision-making for the next five years. It re-asserts our

¹ [Lebanon food security paper \(maginternational.org\)](https://maginternational.org/lebanon-food-security-paper)

² Data provided is for the two-year period since our last update

³ Statistics cover the period from April 2022 to February 2024.

⁴ [MAG Strategy 2024-2028 | MAG \(maginternational.org\)](https://maginternational.org/mag-strategy-2024-2028)

core purpose with the identification of two new **Aims**; it identifies three clear **Priorities** to help us fulfil those Aims; and it makes two **Commitments** to transform the way in which we fulfil those Aims.

In this Communication of Engagement, we reassert our pledge to keep supporting the Global Compact, advancing these principles and making 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 over the course of the last two years.

Commitment to Human Rights

MAG understands in our work to deliver a safe future for the women, men, girls and boys affected by violence, conflict and insecurity we are accountable to the very communities we work with. To ensure this accountability we embed and uphold human rights as an objective in our work, and underlined as one of the commitments outlined in MAG's 2024-2028 strategy: to drive organisational change through principled decision-making.

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 2, programmes follow a participatory approach throughout their project cycles including stakeholders such as national authorities, community members, leaders, HMA actors, I/NGOs, MAG staff, and others. Before, during, and after the implementation of operations, the program involves available social groups, including men, women, boys, and girls, as well as IDPs, returnees, and residents. On a practical level the program is committed to expanding outreach to vulnerable groups in the community through several initiatives:

Adapting tools to meet the needs of communities and contexts:

Adapting Explosive Ordinance Risk Education (EORE) tools to changing contexts and the evolving needs of targeted groups. For instance, in 2023, MAG Lebanon utilized billboards and leaflets distributed at key checkpoints on main roads leading to South Lebanon. Additionally, the organization intensified the use of Digital EORE and leveraged village WhatsApp groups to disseminate crucial EORE messaging in conflict zones inaccessible to other INGOs.

Enhanced Data Collection:

Collecting more diverse data by disaggregating data collection tools to accurately reflect the various groups in the community. For example, in 2023, MAG Lebanon modified its data collection forms to include the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) reached through EORE activities, responding to the emergence of this new vulnerability group after the October 2023 war. Further, data collection across several programme countries has been developed to include the use of the Washington Group Short Set (WGSS) to ensure data is disaggregated to include those persons with disabilities and training provided to teams to collect this data.

Inclusive Material Updates:

Internally initiating discussions on updating EORE materials to better align with the needs of persons with disabilities. As an example, in 2024, middle east operations will seek funding for a project focused on revising all EORE tools and materials in coordination with Lebanese associations for those with disabilities. Further, when designing materials for EORE and Digital EORE MAG takes into consideration the audience, be they children, women, men, or persons with disability as well as languages and cultural norms.

Training Facility Construction:

Currently constructing a training facility in a Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) base, MAG is addressing accommodation challenges identified for LAF women participating in Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM) training. The facility's construction plans prioritize considerations for gender and those with disabilities. By implementing these strategies, MAG aims to enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of its mine action initiatives while responding dynamically to the evolving needs of the community.

In addition, MAG's core values and the IMAS align with human rights principles, and teams are trained on these principles at the time of recruitment, with regular refreshers at the beginning of each year. Additionally, teams receive

biannual training on safeguarding, which includes respecting human rights. Program teams are locally recruited, speak the local language, and are aware of local customs and culturally sensitive issues. Programs adhere to MAG's policy on Ethical Images, taking photos of individuals only after consulting them and obtaining their written consent. Close-up photos of children, women and men's faces are avoided, respecting the area's sensitive political situation. All pre- and post-assessments and focus group discussions are voluntary and we strive to have gender balanced teams.

Commitment to Labour

MAG is committed to giving everyone an equal chance to work, learn, contribute, and live free from discrimination, harassment, and prejudice.

Through MAG's Equal Opportunities Policy, we make a clear commitment that we are opposed to all forms of discrimination. 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 our work, (e.g., design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation) and is applied to all aspects of employment (e.g., recruitment, promotion and training). Our commitment to equal opportunities is reflected by our diverse national and international teams across the organisation, with staff from over 60 different nationalities working across MAG.

Our new Strategic Framework for 2024-2028, sets out MAG's overarching People and Culture aim to develop an inclusive global workforce to ensure we have the right skills, capacity, and culture to deliver the highest quality of programming with the most possible impact. We will do this by:

- Addressing internal power imbalances and eliminating structural barriers to ensure an equitable and inclusive working environment that is free from discrimination.
- Investing in a more diverse global leadership.
- Providing staff with access to professional development and training opportunities so that we have the right skills and capabilities to respond to current and future needs.
- Reviewing our recruitment practices to strengthen processes and ensure they become even more inclusive and increasing our learning and development capacity to increase opportunities for progression.

Over the last two years we have continued to further integrate EDI into all aspects of our work. A key achievement in the progress of our EDI work last year is the establishment of an employee community, the MAG Staff Assembly. The Staff Assembly is a place where staff from diverse backgrounds and different levels in the organisation come together to discuss matters of importance to them, with equal voice, regardless of their position in the organisation, and collaborate to propose solutions, to build a better and more inclusive MAG.

MAG remains a signatory to the diversity charter established by the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO). We continue to take part in a BOND forum for People of Colour (POC) working in International Development.

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.' In all MAG locations, in line with **principle 5**, we state that the minimum age for working with MAG is 18 years old. Employees are entitled to freedom of association, in line with **principle 3**. For example, MAG works with an employee union in Vietnam. In locations where a formalised union is not present, staff are able to provide feedback informally, through the Staff Assembly, through our various reporting mechanisms (see below paragraph on Safeguarding) and through our grievance policy and procedure.

In addition, we continue to strengthen our safeguarding framework and apply organisational learning to improve our culture and practices. MAG's Values and our Policy on Personal Conduct clearly set out the standards of behaviour that are expected of all employees. Since 2018 and following external safeguarding reviews, we have continuously worked to improve the organisational safeguarding culture. We 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, Syria, Laos and Sri Lanka Programmes and focal points in other programmes. 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. Our safeguarding work is supported by a strong set

of policies including dignity at work, equal opportunities, protection of children and vulnerable adults, whistleblowing procedures, grievance and disciplinary policies use of social media and ethical images. The policies are supported by our toolkits on the safeguarding self-assessment, reporting guidelines, an investigation handbook, and performance appraisals.

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.

Our programmes promote inclusivity in the communities we work. For example, our community liaison teams are gender balanced and activities are conducted involving mixed and separate groups to ensure participants are comfortable sharing information about contamination and when teams are disseminating information to communities on explosive ordinance risk education (EORE). Our focus group discussions are conducted with the participation of people with disabilities, IDPs, returnees and residents taking a conflict sensitivity approach. The EORE sessions are provided in person and include children. In our Middle East programme these sessions have targeted working children, those that search for scrap metal or in manual labour e.g. farmland or workshops. The CL team prioritizes these locations based on the programmes's experience. There have been many success stories of children who have stopped working and enrolled in schools with the efforts of MAG CL team.

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.

Commitment to Environment

MAG's commitment to Environmental Responsibility is integral to our new Strategic Framework for 2024-2028, wherein we pledge to comprehensively understand, account for, and minimize the impact of our operations on the environment and climate over the next five years. Recognizing the global and local repercussions of climate change and ecological decline, particularly on vulnerable communities, MAG has outlined four key pillars to guide our strategic initiatives:

- By 2025, we aim to assess our global environmental impact and establish targets to reduce our carbon footprint by 45% by 2030, aligning with the Paris Agreement.
- We seek to enhance our understanding of the intersection between climate change and our programming, operational goals and needs we seek to address
- Innovation at the operational level will be encouraged to integrate environmentally sensitive designs into our programmes.
- We are committed to fostering a culture of environmental safeguarding and responsibility throughout our organisation.

In our programmes across the Asia Pacific region, including Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia, MAG has forged partnerships with local NGOs specializing in environmental issues, focusing particularly on waste management improvement to mitigate significant greenhouse gas emissions and enhance air quality. Energy saving measures through the use of solar panels have already been taken and continue to be explored across a number of programmes, such as Laos, Angola, South Sudan, Sri Lanka. In West Africa a study was conducted in partnership with an environmental and climate research agency to research the environmental impact of small arms ammunition destruction and options for recycling. In the Middle East MAG has made steps to reduce its carbon footprint through the use of UPS back-up systems in offices and guesthouse reducing electricity usage after working hours, allowing generators to be switched off. Additionally, utilizing the organization's operations' management information system (OMIS) to facilitate data collection, reduces paper consumption. The reduction of plastic usage has been encouraged through the provision of water dispensers and refillable bottles for employees across a number of MAG operational countries. Further, teams are encouraging the monitoring of the environmental footprint, for example in Laos fleet monitoring tools are being developed as well as mapping of national protected areas and key biodiversity.

At headquarters, MAG collects data on emissions in metric tonnes of CO₂ through the use of and in doing so can make interventions to reduce its emissions in line with its carbon reduction plan. These emissions are measured across electricity use and business travel, the latter being broken down to cover air, rail and road transport used for business purposes.

Also, MAG actively participates in forums such as the Environmental Issues and Mine Action (EIMA) Working Group and the IMAS Review Board, contributing to the review of standard IMAS 07.13 Environmental Management in Mine Action. We are committed to enhancing our environmental performance through compliance with ISO 14001:2015 and relevant legislation. Our recent successful external audits for ISO 14001:2015 and ISO 9001:2015 certification demonstrate our commitment to environmental and quality management.

MAG's involvement in initiatives like the UK Environment Agency's Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme reflects our dedication to reducing energy consumption. We continuously evaluate opportunities for energy savings and publish annual carbon reduction plans to transparently communicate our progress and commitments. MAG's emissions were down by nearly 30% in 2023 from 2022 emission figures.

Commitment to 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.

On a practical level, programmes conduct internal Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Control (QC) activities at the country level by senior management and at the HQ level through ODT visits. External audits are also conducted by donors. This process includes all support and operations teams.

Furthermore, certain MAG programs have launched a comprehensive Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) to allow stakeholders to easily share comments, concerns, and suggestions. This includes MAG suggestion boxes, a hotline phone number for calls, SMS, and WhatsApp messages, as well as the option to pass concerns through mine action authorities or MAG's CL team. Externally, this process is open widely, and internally, staff can report to an anonymous email and direct communications with the line manager or the program's Feedback and Complaints Reporting Coordinator. All comments and cases are handled confidentially by the program's Senior Management Team (SMT).

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.

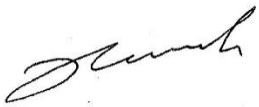
Conclusion

MAG's continued work with communities with the aim of reducing the devastating impact of armed violence and conflict has been recognised as co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997. It was this advocacy work that 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. Continuing this advocacy, MAG joined the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW) in 2019, a network of NGOs calling for immediate action to prevent human suffering from the use of explosive weapons. This has been most recently noted,

when in November 2022 MAG contributed to the consultations in Dublin on the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA). The aim of this political declaration is to address the humanitarian consequences in the use of explosive weapons - especially those with wide area effects – to civilians and infrastructure, the latter further denying access to basic needs such as clean water, food, and electricity. The catastrophic impact being evident in today's conflicts. The consequences of the use of EWIPA continue for generations to come, as the process of restoring essential services and agricultural land is protracted, exacerbated by unexploded ordnance left behind. In built-up areas, clearance of unexploded ordnance becomes increasingly complex and resource intensive, prohibiting even the first steps towards recovery.

The journey ahead requires an unwavering commitment to strengthening the protection of civilians, by upholding International Humanitarian Law, preventing corruption, providing equal opportunities and addressing the environmental consequences, the UN Global compact principals which MAG aligns with.

Sincerely yours,



Darren Cormack

Chief Executive, MAG

att: ANNUAL REVIEW

[MAG Annual Report 2023.pdf \(maginternational.org\)](https://maginternational.org)