

13/11/12 AM



Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain  
Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively  
Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW)

Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War  
12 – 13 November, Geneva

**Statement by the Mines Advisory Group (MAG)  
on Generic Preventive Measures**

(Check Against Delivery)

Mr Coordinator,

MAG welcomes the focus on safe and secure storage of ammunition within discussions on Protocol V. We shared our views on the importance of this issue at the Meeting of Experts earlier in the year and repeat our thanks to the Coordinator for the opportunity to present our operational approaches and reflections.

We would like to stress again that across multiple continents the unsafe storage of munitions, particularly obsolete or degraded ammunition, presents a significant threat to communities and to human security. This is particularly the case when explosive weapons are stored in significant quantities in populated areas or where there is a lack of technical and financial resource to properly prioritise and address the issue. March's depot explosion at the ECCRAMU site in Brazzaville in the Republic of Congo was a tragic illustration of the impact that Unplanned Explosions at Munitions Sites have on human security and infrastructure.

In Brazzaville, MAG is still working to respond to the aftermath of the explosion, in close cooperation with the Congolese government, UNMAS and other partners. The scale of the national and international response demonstrates that in addition to the loss of life and detrimental impact on infrastructure and livelihoods, Unplanned Explosions at Munitions Sites invariably lead to a requirement for costly and complex clearance and reconstruction programmes. These costs far exceed those associated with the implementation of preventative measures, even in cases where significant physical rehabilitation or relocation of storage facilities is the only option.

MAG and other members of the humanitarian disarmament community continue to receive requests for technical cooperation and assistance. Several States have taken the lead in supporting initiatives to address the unsafe and insecure storage of weapons and munitions. Many of these initiatives have demonstrated how close cooperation between States, expert NGOs and international organisations can provide timely and cost-effective responses. However the need for assistance, particularly in Africa, continues to far exceed the financial resources available. We call on States to increase the level of financial support to destroy surplus or degraded munitions and improve safety and storage standards. We would like to reiterate the value of medium to long-term strategies and

programmes over short interventions and stress that resources for improving safety in ammunition storage required must be in addition to that necessary for the continued implementation of mine action programmes.

Thank You.

**END**