

## CONCEPT NOTE

### BOOSTING MEMBER STATE SUPPORT FOR MINE ACTION IN NEW YORK

#### Background

Member State Groups of Friends originated in the early 1990s to support, or work alongside, the United Nations to prevent and resolve conflicts. Their titles varied, e.g. Friends of the Secretary-General; Core Groups and Contact Groups; Troikas, the Quartet and the Quintet; and a broad array of Implementation and/or Monitoring Committees<sup>1</sup>. One common feature of all these arrangements was their focus on a particular country/territory situation. Since the mid-2000s, Groups of Friends increasingly serve as centers of advocacy and cooperation to support specific sectors or issues<sup>2</sup>.

‘Thematic’ Groups of Friends have raised the profile of UN work, increased advocacy opportunities and engagement with UN legislative and budgetary organs and, in some cases, served as useful platforms for fundraising. The Groups of Friends of Security Sector Reform, Rule of Law, United Nations Police, and United Nations Corrections are all highly visible advocacy platforms at UN Headquarters in New York.

#### Does a Group of Friends of Mine Action Already Exist?

The Mine Action Support Group (MASG) was established in 1998 to unite donor nations in discussions on efforts to address the impact of explosive ordnance.

The MASG was not established to prioritize advocacy in support of mine action, and yet member state advocacy in the United Nations legislative bodies could yield stronger mine action mandates and increase budget allocations. A MASG-NY could expand membership beyond donor states to include member states that engage in the sector as advocates and/or as states affected by explosive ordnance.

#### MASG New York

The establishment of a Group of Friends of Mine Action in New York, or a MASG-NY, is proposed for consideration of MASG members. to serve as a platform for mine action advocacy within UN legislative bodies of the Secretariat and Agencies, Funds and Programmes and among member states on mine action-related issues.

#### MASG New York Terms of Reference

MASG-NY activities carried out in support of the UN mine action entities may include:

- **Providing political support for mine action** in the United Nations legislative bodies to adequately resource and reflect mine action in General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and in the mandates and budgets of peace operations.
- **Ensuring that mine action is firmly anchored** in the cross-cutting agendas such as the **SDGs**.

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<sup>1</sup> Teresa Whitfield, “A Crowded Field: Groups of Friends, the United Nations and the Resolution of Conflict,” at [https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/ACrowdedField\\_WhitefieldCIC2005.pdf](https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/ACrowdedField_WhitefieldCIC2005.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> David Joseph Deutch, “What are friends for?: ‘Groups of Friends’ and the UN system,” at <https://www.universal-rights.org/blog/what-are-friends-for-groups-of-friends-and-the-un-system/>

- **Securing resources to address new threats in mine action**, by contributing in-kind expertise.
- **Serving as a forum to engage troop- and police- contributing countries** on the safety and security of peacekeepers operating in explosive ordnance risk environments.
- **Soliciting Member State inputs and contributions** into United Nations mine action strategic documents, policies, knowledge-sharing and organizational learning initiatives when appropriate.

The Chair of the MASG and the Chair of the MASG-NY may or may not be the same member state.

The MASG-NY Chair may, inter alia:

- Convene side events during the General Assembly and on the margin of special events to draw attention to mine action issues
- Consolidating MASG-NY members to develop and deliver advocacy strategies around mine action mandates or budget issues
- Facilitating the participation and contribution of member states to the International Day for Mine Awareness & Assistance in Mine Action (4 April) and other public information campaigns promoting mine action in New York.

The Chair would prepare and lead MASG-NY meetings, in close collaboration with the members. It will be the focal point for all communications and distribution of information within the MASG-NY. The Chair will also be the focal point for all communications with DPO and other United Nations entities. Co-chairing may also be considered to allow for an explosive ordnance-affected country and a donor country to bring diverse perspectives to the group.