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United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention: Twenty-first Meeting of the States Parties
(20 - 24 November 2023)

[Statement under agenda item 10c – Cooperation and Assistance]

Geneva, Wednesday 22 November 2023

Delivered by UNMAS

Mr. President¹,

This statement is delivered on behalf of the UN Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA).²

We welcome Cambodia's proposal to preside and host the Fifth Review Conference of the Anti-Personal Mine Ban Convention. As a country well advanced on its path toward becoming mine-free, generous in sharing its experience with other States, active in promoting universalization of the Convention, and contributing troops with mine action expertise to peacekeeping missions, Cambodia is well-positioned to preside over the Convention at a critical juncture. We also highlight Cambodia's attention to mine survivors which was on full display during the Third Global Conference on Victim Assistance hosted in Phnom Penh in October with the support of the European Union.

¹ H.E. Mr. Thomas Göbel, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of Germany to the Conference on Disarmament, President of the Twenty-first Meeting of the States Parties (21MSP).

² The United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action consists of twelve United Nations Departments and Offices of the Secretariat, specialized agencies, funds and programmes: the United Nations Mine Action Service of the Department of Peace Operations, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the World Bank are observers.



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Cooperation is key to achieving the Convention's objectives. In this sense, the UN supports efforts by France as Chair of the Committee on Article V implementation, in consultation with States Parties, to strengthen the process by which extension requests are reviewed and to link this process more closely to the Committee on Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance. The UN has assisted national authorities in several States to prepare their extension requests in the past and stands ready to further engage to address challenges together, in a coordinated manner with all parties concerned.

The threat posed by improvised explosive devices, many of which are victim-activated, has progressively expanded and accounted for almost half of the 9,198 casualties recorded by UN programmes in 2022. The UN, through its mine action programmes, will continue to enhance the capacity of States to reduce the threat posed by antipersonnel mines of an improvised nature.

Since 2017, UNMAS has worked with the Ministry of Interior of Iraq to enhance the country's capacity to mitigate explosive threats across the country. Together they have provided 105 training courses to 1,822 personnel (1,437 men and 385 women) in explosive ordnance disposal, use of drone in non-technical surveys, first responder, and post blast investigation. The top students are selected for an additional 'Train-the-Trainers' course combining the lessons learned during their training with 'Methods of Instruction' to assist in passing on their skills to other officers. The MoI has 57 sub-units across Iraq that responds to EOD/IEDD callouts on a weekly basis.

UNMAS has also implemented the 'partnership model' whereby international non-governmental organizations partner with national NGOs to transfer knowledge and skills



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required to provide EO clearance across the spectrum of abilities including Non-Technical Survey, Technical Survey, and IED Disposal. Two national NGOs have now received accreditation from the Iraqi Directorate of Mine Action to autonomously conduct operations.

To succeed in meeting their obligations under the Convention, national mine action authorities and the national and international organizations that support them, depend on funding, access, accreditation, and capacity all being in place. In Afghanistan, mine action operators have access to the whole country and adequate expertise to carry out survey and clearance, but funding is a challenge. In Yemen, UNDP is closing its programme due to lack of funding, although contamination is still considerable.

We encourage and appreciate increased bilateral and regional cooperation to address mine contamination located in border areas. ASEAN has consolidated its cooperation through the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre. The African Regional Seminar on Mine Action hosted by Algeria in May stressed the importance of enhancing coordination among African States through a continental mine action network and exploring new opportunities for international cooperation. The UN has provided technical support to the African Union to develop its mine action strategy. We also encourage regional border control and intelligence-sharing efforts to reduce the ability of armed groups and organized criminal entities to deploy improvised mines.

Violent armed conflict in Myanmar, Sudan, and Ukraine have raised serious concerns about the impact of weapons on civilians and adherence to existing norms. Echoing the Secretary-General in his policy brief on A New Agenda for Peace launched in July 2023, we call on States Parties to reduce the human cost of weapons, including through achieving universality of treaties like this Convention and the banning of inhumane and indiscriminate weapons.



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The United Nations stands ready to engage in and support preparations for the next action plan that will be adopted in Cambodia.

Thank you.

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