



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

**Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
Lusaka, 12 September 2012**

Statement on Cooperation and Assistance

**Delivered by Ms. Agnès Marcaillou, Director, UNMAS
on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action (IACG-MA)**

Mr. President,

I am delivering the following statement on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action (IACG-MA), comprising the 12 United Nations Departments, Agencies, Funds, and Programmes involved in mine action.

The United Nations commends the work done by you and the Coordinators, Mexico and Sweden, on the status and progress regarding this important issue. We welcome the proposal for the creation of an online Cooperation Portal for potential recipients of cooperation and donors, as a means to improve channels of communication on needs and project requirements, respectively. The United Nations stands ready to assist in any way necessary.

Linking international assistance and cooperation with the actual needs on the ground is of paramount importance, and this likely represents a reason why the United Nations is one of the preferred channels for mine action assistance, including to twenty States parties and signatories to this Convention.

Establishing and strengthening this link does not come without challenges, such as the identification of the requirements, the planning of the operations, the seeking of resources to match the needs or the actual coordination and implementation of mine action activities.

The United Nations attaches great importance to the exchange of best practices, equipment, technology, skills, and experiences among States parties. The United Nations supported and managed programmes do not work in isolation and frequent exchanges of experiences between national programmes are encouraged and facilitated.

For example, UNICEF facilitated the visit of a government delegation from Iraq to Sri Lanka to exchange ideas about methodologies for risk education and data collection proven to be successful and effective in Sri Lanka. Also, UNDP facilitated visits of representatives from eight mine-affected to Cambodia to learn from its technical and management experiences. In Côte d'Ivoire, UNMAS arranged visits of delegations from the African region including from Chad, Darfur, and the Republic of Congo, to share best practices and successful experiences in weapons and ammunition management and physical security of stockpiles. UNMAS ensured sharing of expertise and training materials in risk education.

These exchanges are only a few good examples of South-South cooperation with the United Nations as an effective facilitator.

The United Nations is also well aware that its Strategy on Mine Action 2013-2018 can only be successful if supported by an effective and well-resourced monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanism through which to collect data and report on progress.

During the side event on monitoring and evaluation organized earlier this week by the United Nations, UNMAS presented on the efforts being undertaken to develop such an M&E mechanism. Danish Demining Group (DDG) introduced efforts being undertaken amongst NGOs, with input from the United Nations, on a sector-wide outcome monitoring initiative. Chairing the side event, Australia reconfirmed the important focus on M&E that these two new initiatives provided. The United Nations extends its thanks and appreciation to Australia and DDG for their engagement and participation.

The United Nations looks forward to continuing this dialogue on M&E approaches and best practices, which is reflective of the cooperation and partnership that, so far, has been so integral to the development of the UN Strategy and the UN M&E Mechanism.

Mr. President,

As highlighted in the Lusaka Progress Report, one of the important challenges is the need to maintain reliable and continuous assistance to affected states, especially in relation to long-term requirements and objectives. The United Nations shares the view that it is critical that assistance to affected states maintains this momentum in the most effective way possible. To overcome this challenge, we need to secure mine action funding. Our collective success depends on it.

With this in mind, the United Nations commends donor states who comply with Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles and who have convinced their respective governments of the merits of doing so.

One particularly critical element of success is the ability of national programmes to ensure multi-year programming when funds tend to be allocated on a one-year basis. This disruption in funding often leads to a limited time for implementation and institutional inefficiency within the programme cycle. A further gap relates to the ability to maintain a proper capacity to respond to crisis and emergency situations.

At a time when many donor states are reassessing their own mine action strategies, it would be essential to continue to bear in mind immediate humanitarian response activities, such as clearance and risk reduction education, in addition to survey and marking.

The United Nations would also like to refer to gaps and challenges regarding international assistance and cooperation for victims of landmines, cluster munitions, and other explosive remnants of war. In this regard, consideration should be given to how available international bilateral funding in support of national public health and social welfare sectors could generate

positive results in terms of fulfilling the needs of persons with disabilities and in improving the quality of and accessibility to required services. While this funding is not specifically related to mine action, more research in this area would be welcome in order to better understand the benefits of this type of bilateral funding to the lives of mine and ERW victims and, more generally, of persons with disabilities.

Affected states, organizations, and the United Nations are reporting a negative impact in the services they are able to provide as a result of declining funding. The United Nations urges delegates to bolster their support for this important work and convince their capitals that the cost of not funding mine action activities at the proper level is ultimately expressed in lives being affected and an increased cost of aid to development.

In conclusion, in response to the question raised by the Lusaka progress report, the United Nations will continue to offer its existing structures and close relationship with affected countries and communities to channel their needs to those in a position to provide assistance.

The United Nations will also continue to offer platforms for dialogue and exchanges on good practices. The United Nations also continues to offer its unique expertise and structures to facilitate the elaboration of long-term planning.

Lastly, the United Nations would like to recall its commitment to building national capacities so as to allow adequate and timely transfer of mine action responsibilities to sovereign countries. The UNMAS transfer to national ownership in Afghanistan last year, on 2 April 2012, is evidence that such transfers can be done and ownership can be successful.

Thank you.