



**Standing Committee on General Status and Operation of the Convention
Geneva, 20 and 24 June 2011**

Intervention on behalf of the UN Mine Action Team

Thank you Mister Co-Chair¹,

I deliver the following statement on behalf of the United Nations Mine Action Team (UNMAT), comprising the 14 United Nations Departments, Agencies, Funds, and Programmes² involved in mine action.

This statement reflects United Nations activities and initiatives of relevance to the Standing Committee on General Status and Operation of the Convention since the 10th Meeting of States Parties (29 November – 3 December 2010).

Overview of the General Status of Universalization

Efforts to promote the universalization of the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention continue and remain a priority for the United Nations.

The recent use of anti-personnel mines in Libya clearly demonstrates that even if not employed for many years, there is a strong potential that armed actors will deploy landmines if they remain accessible for use without considering their humanitarian and long term socioeconomic consequences. This underscores that only universal accession and adherence to the Convention and its faithful and timely implementation could ensure a mine-free world.

The UN Mine Action Team recognizes the fact that there are still a number of mine-affected countries that have not yet adhered to the Mine Ban Convention. We are disappointed that no new States have joined the Convention since 2007, despite the tireless, devoted and ample efforts of many persons and entities represented today, including Presidents of Meetings and Review Conferences of States Parties to the Convention, His Royal Highness, Prince Mired of Jordan, in his capacity as Special Envoy of the Presidency, individual actors and not least the efforts by ICBL

During this reporting period, the United Nations has taken a number of opportunities to call for the universal adherence to the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention. At the 10th Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC, the Secretary-General stated in his message that he was firmly

¹ Co-Chairs : Canada and Thailand

² UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (ODA), UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank.

convinced that anti-personnel landmines have no place in our world and he renewed his call on all States that have not yet done so to accede to the Mine Ban Convention as soon as possible.

The Secretary-General again called for the universal adherence and implementation of the treaty on the 4 April 2011 in support of the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action³, as well as calling for increased support for mine awareness and mine action.

In New York, the main event was an exhibition entitled “DETERMINED – Images of the people affected by landmines and explosive remnants of war”, comprising photographs by renowned photographers Arne Hodalic and Kike Arnal. The meeting included statements by the Under-Secretary General for Public Information and the Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia and the Chairman of the Managing Board of the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance.

In the Palais de Nations of Geneva a UN photo exhibition, organized by UNMAS and the Mine Action Coordination Centre in the Democratic Republic of Congo, was launched by the Director of the Library of the UN Office in Geneva and the Permanent Representative of the DRC. In Rome, UNMAS and the Italian Campaign to Ban Landmines, with the support of WFP, launched a photo exhibition on Afghanistan, with photos by Charlotte Oestervang, followed by a Conference for the protection of civilian populations, disarmament and humanitarian development.

The United Nations also organized and supported special events in a number of mine affected countries commemorating the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action. For example, a ceremony in the UNIFIL Sector West Headquarters in Shama; a drawing competition in the Mogadishu’s Medina Hospital; media campaigns in Colombia and Nepal; or a special celebration chaired by the Secretary-General of the National Mine Action Authority in Khartoum. Other activities include the opening by UNDP of a special website on the occasion of the Global Mine Action Day dedicated to Arab States.

The United Nations acknowledges the fact that landmines are also a threat when used and/or possessed by Non-State Actors. Non-State Actors should also refrain to acquire, keep, use and transfer antipersonnel mines and should be encouraged to undertake mine action activities in the areas under their control. We support all efforts at eliciting commitments by NSA towards a mine ban and for mine action, including notably the work of the Geneva Call.

A recent example is the formal and public pledge by the National Transition Council in Libya not to use of landmines. This was the result of advocacy efforts by Human Rights Watch, Handicap International, Mines Advisory Group, UNICEF and UNMAS in the field. There is no record of use of landmines by NTC forces since the announcement of this commitment.

I should also mention that the UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/65/48 on the Convention was adopted by 164 votes to none with 17 abstentions (five more votes in favor than last year and one less abstention).

We will continue to pursue, and support with our advocacy efforts, these accession efforts - particularly, through in-country capacities, of those currently receiving UN support in mine action.

³ 4 April 2011

As others we wish to thank Canada, and John McBride in particular, for the great work in leading the Universalization Contact Group and we welcome Belgium as the new Coordinator.

Implementation Support Unit

The United Nations Mine Action Team looks forward to a final agreement regarding the Implementation Support Unit and reiterates its commitment to work closely with the ISU in supporting the effective and timely implementation of the Convention.

Article 7: Transparency and the exchange of information

We take this opportunity to confirm once again the readiness of the United Nations to assist States Parties in the preparation of their annual Article 7 reports. During this period, UNDP, UNICEF and UNMAS have provided this assistance to a number of States Parties currently receiving support from the United Nations in mine action. Most of them have submitted their annual transparency reports for 2011.⁴⁵

We welcome the voluntary submission of Article 7 reports by non-State Parties, and we encourage those countries to take a step forward and join the Convention at the earliest possible date.

UNODA continues to update the database of Article 7 reports with the submissions by States Parties or other states on a voluntary basis.

We take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the efforts of Belgium, in its capacity of Coordinator of the Article 7 Contact Group, in promoting compliance with this important provision in the Convention.

Compliance

UNODA continued to update the list of names and other data of qualified experts who could be designated for fact finding missions authorized in accordance with Article 8.8 of the Convention.

Implementation of Article 9

With regards to Article 9 and the development and adoption of legislative, administrative and other measures, UNMAS, UNDP and UNICEF have assisted some States Parties in the preparation of national legislation on mine action. Mozambique and Bosnia and Herzegovina are recent cases in which, with the support of UNDP, the governments of both countries have submitted bills of law on mine action to their respective Parliaments. In the case of Mozambique the text of the bill is under further development. As of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the new law is waiting of its adoption and new mine action plans and national mine action standards would be adjusted accordingly. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, UNMAS assisted in drafting mine action law. The text of the law has been adopted in both chambers of the Parliament, but is

⁴ Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Jordan, Mauritania, Sudan, Tajikistan. Thailand, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

⁵ Those who have not submitted their 2011 annual reports yet are : Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Senegal and Uganda.

awaiting for the harmonization of some divergences before it is promulgated by the President of the DRC.

In December 2010, the Government of Colombia, currently receiving support by UNDP, UNICEF and UNMAS in mine action, approved law 1421 to allow civilian demining organizations to operate. This law would enable further clearance activities in Colombia that will assist the country in complying with its article 5 obligations. The process of regulating this legislation is underway, led by PAICMA, the Ministry of Defense and the Colombian Armed Forces, with technical support from the UN.

Preparation for the 11MSP

We thank the President designate of the 11MSP and we want to assure him the full support of the UN Mine Action Team for a successful conference. The members of the UNMAT have started preparations for our participation in and support to the 11MSP in Cambodia. For example, UNODA is already providing its technical advise for the organization of the event and UNDP is providing support to the 11MSP through the administration of financial contributions from donors to the Host Country in addition to the financial and logistic support to the preparation of activities for the Meeting.

Concluding Remarks

The United Nations Mine Action Team considers that the success of the Mine Ban Treaty in combating the suffering caused by landmines presents us with a model to tackle other threats, not least as the recent process that led to the Convention on Cluster Munitions but also such as those caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. The Treaty continues to provide an inspiration for mine action and human security across the globe.

Thank you.