



Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action

13th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Statement on General Exchange of Views

Agenda item 8

Geneva, 2 December 2013

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

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action (IACG-MA), I wish to congratulate you on your appointment as President of the Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

Algeria has consistently been an active supporter of the Convention. We are confident that, under your leadership, this 13th Meeting of States Parties will be a productive one and that it will pave the way for a successful Review Conference next year. I would like to assure you of the UN's full cooperation and support during this journey of major significance for affected communities and peoples, and for the international community at large.

Mr. President,

As other speakers have said already, the Convention continues to be a cornerstone of international humanitarian law. Ridding the world of anti-personnel mines remains at the core of our collective goal and responsibility. In the world of mine action, no actor, regardless on how determined and wealthy, can succeed alone.

Your attachment to concentrate our work and efforts on partnerships for cooperation and assistance is indeed reflective of this humbling –and also- motivating reality.

Mr. President,

It is noteworthy that this year, Mine Action “in all its aspects” has regained its space, high on the UN agenda:

You may recall, Mr President, that, in the UN Mine Action Strategy 2013-2018, the UN reaffirmed its commitments to act effectively and efficiently towards a world free of the threat of mines; the UN also committed itself to transparency, clarity accountability and effective partnerships.

The issues that we will review this week together were the subject of in-depth and comprehensive consultations within and outside the United Nations.

The work of the UN will be supported and guided by realistic indicators and measurable objectives, which will also be shared with stakeholders. Whilst the primary responsibility to act remains with States, the UN will deliver as One and facilitate and provide prioritized marking, fencing, technical and non-technical survey, and clearance; it will support and provide mine-ERW risk education; it will coordinate and support immediate emergency responses; it will assist States to destroy their stockpiles; support affected states in collecting mine action data, disaggregated by age and gender, and support national information management systems. The UN will also continue to promote gender mainstreaming and the implementation of the United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes.

In endorsing this Strategy, the United Nations has re-committed itself to supporting States' implementation of this Convention as well as to redoubling its advocacy and outreach efforts in favor of the universalization of the Convention.

Mr. President,

Last fall, the UN Secretary General issued its report to the General Assembly on "Assistance in Mine Action" (A/68/305). In it, the Secretary General underlines that "mine action is multifaceted, cross-cutting and carried out in complex and challenging environments. United Nations interventions and programmes enable the protection of civilians, peacekeeping and political missions, humanitarian assistance, early recovery and development. Mine Action enables the safe deployment of UN personnel, access for humanitarian aid, the safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons and their access to basic services."

Most importantly, all aspects of the implementation of the Convention, which we will review this week, are people driven, from universalization to international cooperation, States and other stakeholders undertakings are aimed at saving lives and ensuring freedom of movement and well-being of peoples and communities and also restoring the dignity and protecting the rights of survivors.

One month ago, on November 1st, the 4th Committee of the UN General Assembly adopted without a vote the biennial resolution on "Assistance in Mine action".

The members of the IACG-MA welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution, which marked a change in the approach of member states, moving from their traditional iteration of previously agreed language to building on the foundations laid out by of the previous resolutions and introducing some new language. This move by member states, a bold move in UN circles I would say, reflects the GA's willingness to reflect change, progress made, the challenges and concerns which remain as well as the necessity for all stakeholders to maintain their resolve and improve their actions to, amongst other things, eradicate the threat, support national programmes, provide

capacity-building assistance, including in the area of victim assistance, as well as improve coordination and cooperation.

The United Nations was, this time again, recognized as playing a “significant role”. The UN’s efforts to enhance cooperation and coordination with civil society organizations and other stakeholders were “noted with appreciation”. For the first time, Member States included, in the Preamble, a short paragraph recognizing the “importance of the full and effective participation of both women and men in mine action programmes”, hence acknowledging the role and contributions of women, as well as men, in mine action programmes, in addition to benefiting from them and being affected as victims. For the first time, also, the General Assembly encouraged States in a position to do so to support the strengthening of “rapid response capacity”.

Mr. President,

The members of the IACG-MA currently support over thirty States parties, including some of the most affected ones. Their compliance with treaty obligations continues to be at the center of the UN’s attention.

The members of the IACG-MA are of the view that strong and consistent support must be provided to those States which submitted sound extension requests to fulfill their international legal obligations. Today again, we join others in calling on those States in a position to do so, to maintain their support throughout the duration agreed upon in the requests.

In this resolution, the General Assembly “urged all States, in particular those in a position to do so (...) to provide reliable, predictable, timely and where possible multi-annual contributions for mine action (...), including to the United Nations, for activities related to rapid response, victim assistance and mine risk education.

Mister President,

As we approach the Third Review Conference of this Convention, many mine-affected countries are close to completion of their Article 5 obligations. We must, collectively, ensure that their commitments are fulfilled.

Similarly, the members of the Coordination Group of the UN call all States’ attention to the fact that the Convention’s promise to landmine survivors, worldwide, is not yet fully realized. Despite significant progress in this area, victims and survivors of landmines and ERW are yet to see their rights fully protected, their needs answered, adequate assistance provided, and their integration as equal members of societies achieved. Their specific needs and requirements must not be forgotten and must be integrated into broader health and disabilities frameworks.

Finally, the members of the Inter-agency group want to echo the deep concerns expressed earlier by the UN Secretary-General at the reported use of anti-personnel landmines. We too urge States to comply with their international legal obligations and for clarification of these allegations to be undertaken.

As the Secretary-General said this morning, anti-personnel mines have no place in a civilized world.

I thank you.