



## United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

### Sixteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (18 December - 21 December)

#### Article 5 Implementation

Mr. President,<sup>1</sup>

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, comprising the United Nations entities<sup>2</sup> involved in mine action.

We warmly congratulate the Government of Algeria who earlier this year completed its clearance obligations under the Convention.

The United Nations welcomes the report of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation. We agree with the report's conclusions; the rate and quality of essential Article 7 transparency reports should increase; submission is an obligation under the Convention. Providing timely and accurate information on successful practices and obstacles in the implementation of the Convention, builds confidence among States Parties and donors, and further encourages international cooperation.

Humanitarian mine action programmes continue to make progress worldwide to clear and release land and infrastructure contaminated by mines and explosive remnants of war. Collectively, in the 33 affected countries/territories which provided data in 2016 to the Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism of the United Nations Mine Action Strategy, 44 per cent of known contaminated land has been returned to communities.

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<sup>1</sup> H.E. Thomas Hajnoczi, Ambassador of Austria to the United Nations

<sup>2</sup> The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) / United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) (Chair), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Development Programme (UNDP), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) (Observer), and the World Bank (Observer).



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Yet, new contamination, including from active conflicts, is being identified at a faster pace than clearance can take place<sup>3</sup> and conflicts continue increasingly to kill and injure. Survivors reporting accidents from “unknown” devices more than quadrupled during the last two years; indicating civilians are facing new explosive threats for the first time, and highlighting the increased challenge of accurate data collection in active conflicts where insecurity hinders access.

Considering the submission of five extension requests this year<sup>4</sup>, and mindful that a few States not party to the Convention and non-state armed actors continue to lay landmines, the United Nations calls for renewed collective efforts to achieve the goal of a world free of mines by 2025. Affected states cannot finish the work alone; the United Nations supports states in meeting this target.

For example, in Iraq, UNMAS is providing a specialized search and clearance capacity to remove explosive hazards, as well as coordinating partners to respond to unprecedented levels of contamination in retaken areas. In doing so, UNMAS is enabling delivery of both humanitarian action prioritized by the UN Country Team, as well as the stabilization plan prioritized by the Government of Iraq and the United Nations. In addition, UNDP provided technical expertise to Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Iraq, Ukraine, Yemen, and Zimbabwe in the preparation of extension requests.

Dear colleagues.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the common driver of our work; mine action makes a critical contribution. An assessment undertaken in Afghanistan revealed that within one year of clearance, in the area of the study newly planted crops such as wheat,

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<sup>3</sup> Report of the 6th Round of Data Collection, M&E Mechanism of the UN Strategy for Mine Action 2013 – 2018. United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action. July 2017

<sup>4</sup> Angola, Ecuador, Iraq, Thailand, Zimbabwe



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fruit, and pistachio, contributed over USD 218,000 to the local economy. Similarly, in Cambodia, post-clearance impact surveys show that previously mine affected households upgraded their livelihoods enabling the introduction of new crops.

This is encouraging.

The United Nations warmly thanks States for their steadfast contributions which enable our success.

The United Nations will continue to support affected countries in meeting their Article 5 obligations and achieving the vision of a 2025 mine-free world”.

Thank you.