



Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First allow me to congratulate the Presidency of the Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties (16MSP) to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention for the excellent organization of this event and for hosting us in Vienna, Austria.

Lebanon was the first State Party from the Middle East to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions but did not yet accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention but it adheres to its noble causes and tries to work along with the 2010-2014 Cartagena Action Plan and the Maputo 2014-2019 action plan. Lebanon has never produced or exported antipersonnel mines and doesn't use or stockpile or transport any anti-personnel mines, however the Lebanese army retains very few numbers for training purposes. We previously stated that we are unable to join the Mine Ban Treaty due to the continuing conflict with Israel in particular following the 2006 Israel aggression that still raises serious and daily concerns about the security of our southern border.

From 1975 until today, Lebanon continues to suffer from contamination with mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) from the consequences of civil war and Israel's repeated wars and aggressions, and from the war against terrorism and ISIS. To note, the most heavily contaminated areas are those classified as primary source of survival to the majority of the communities: agricultural lands and echo-touristic areas etc. we have around 3769 victims' since 1975. In 2017, 21 casualties were recorded.

In August 2017, the Lebanese Army launched a military operation to expel ISIS from north-eastern border, which was found to have extensive contamination from mines and booby-traps that resulted in casualties and death of soldiers and civilians. This created an enormous new challenge in particular in terms of non-technical survey due to a new type of contamination used by ISIS.

Following the successful liberation, we immediately began planning for the decontamination of the land to enable the return of residents. Accordingly, it was necessary to launch an awareness campaign immediately, and begin surveying the contaminated area, in preparation for clearance.

Accordingly, As a result of a past and new armed conflicts, Lebanon baseline contamination has significant variations yearly.

Besides the north eastern border, the blue line is another area that necessitates clearance as of 2016. As you may know, the blue line is the land drawn up by the United Nations between Lebanon and Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon.

Another major challenge we face is a direct result of the Syrian crisis since Lebanon welcomed about 1.5 million Syrian displaced people. A great number of them live in contaminated lands. As such in the past couple

of years most victims were Syrian refugees. Many of them have taken their own random camps, mostly near minefields and land contaminated with cluster bombs and unexploded ordnance

Despite the major challenges we face LMAC succeeded in accomplishing great achievements this year. We are proud to announce that we established the first Regional School for Humanitarian Demining in Lebanon and we are ready to welcome you all for a visit or a training session in Lebanon.

In addition, LMAC signed an MOU with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to manage and coordinate the Arab Regional Cooperation Programme for Mine Action. We are ready to put The Regional School for Humanitarian Demining in Lebanon (RSHDL), at the service of the ARCP. LMAC plans to offer explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) courses, among others, at the RSHDL

In addition, we achieved many great results in terms of clearance most notably starting operations on the blue line which we launched in cooperation with the United Nations forces and non-governmental organizations. Till today we have cleared 63% of minefield (including BL)

In terms of MRE we head and fully support the National Committee and its programs which includes activities, seminars and forums all over the Lebanese territory, covering all segments of society without discrimination between citizens and displaced persons.

As for Mine Victims Assistance, the Lebanese National Committee headed also by LMAC is actively supporting job creation and providing many types of assistance to victims including medical, psychological and rehabilitation services. This assistance is not only for the victims themselves but also for their families, especially children and women.

In addition, we are also continuously and quite actively urging the government through public events and meetings to speed up the implementation of the law on the Rights of People with Disability

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lebanon will keep supporting the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Cluster Munitions. Lebanon strives in contributing at the national, regional, and international levels to implement sound mine actions including risk educational programs, victims' assistance, clearance operations, resource mobilization and advocacy.

Last but not least, allow me to thank in the name of the Lebanese people and the leadership of the army all those who strongly supported of our program since 1998, the date of the establishment of the Center to achieve our goal of making Lebanon free of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) and preserving the safety of our people.