

Lebanon Statement on international Cooperation and Assistance

Mr. President and Chair of the session

Excellences

Distinguished guests,

I want to thank the government of Spain and the government of Mexico on their efforts to show the best practices and lessons learned in relation to cooperation and assistance within the framework of the CCM.

Lebanon is a country that survived consecutive destructive wars. The socioeconomic status of most of the population affected by cluster munitions is very low. The government available funds for post war recovery and specifically for mine action are not sufficient to overcome the problem. Lebanon couldn't survive the legacy of the different wars and hostilities and specifically cluster munitions if not for donor assistance and cooperation.

I want to thank all the governments and organizations that supported Lebanon during the last years and specifically the following countries that are still assisting us: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, European Union, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, US, Saudi Arabia.

For Lebanon to reach its target of being free of cluster munitions by 2016, the National Strategy states that 30 BAC Teams are needed each year. In 2011, 26 BAC teams were operational, which leaves a shortfall of 4 teams or USD 1.44 million in funding terms. Currently, 24 BAC teams are operating, which leaves a shortfall of 6 teams or USD 2.16 million. To compensate for 2011 and 2012 deficit, additional funding will be needed in future years to stay on track towards the 2016 target. In addition, the funds available for Mine Victims Assistance and Mine Risk Education are particularly low. While much work was undertaken in these areas in 2011, the lack of funding in these areas is resulting in the Lebanon Mine Action Program not being able to provide for the needs of all survivors or effectively inform all affected communities of the dangers of mines and cluster munitions.

The Lebanese Government contributes salaries, equipment, and the running costs for the LAF regiment two engineering companies, LAF manual clearance teams, dog teams, and mechanical machinery, and salaries, equipment, and running costs for LMAC and RMAC. This contribution to mine action is estimated conservatively at about USD 8 million per year.

In addition, the Ministry of Health provides medical care to survivors, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education contributes to risk education through trained health and teaching personnel, and the Ministry of Social Affairs provides socio-economic rehabilitation services. The costing of these services is being undertaken to provide an accurate figure but it is currently estimated at around USD \$250,000.

The Lebanon National Mine Action Program has also recently fostered an emerging engagement with the Lebanese private sector through a very successful partnership developed between LMAC and BLOM Bank. In addition to raising additional resources for mine action in Lebanon, it has resulted in raising

more awareness on the subject. In 2010, the bank launched a credit card that combines the benefits of Mastercard credit card, with the ability to donate to the LMAC. Donations are made whenever cardholders pay the card's annual fee and whenever cardholders use their card for purchases or for cash withdrawals. This partnership ensured long-term income for demining, MRE and MVA activities in Lebanon. In 2011, this partnership resulted in an income of around USD 340,000 that was mainly spent on clearance and demining equipment.

As an affected state Lebanon and to facilitate assistance, we are trying to make our planning more realistic, have SMART objectives and be accountable. Similarly, we strive to create an environment where funds are not being wasted, where operators do not have to wait idly for memorandums of understanding, importation of equipment, visas for the staff, and other delays due to bureaucratic processes.

Lebanon does not have sufficient resources to meet the convention's lifesaving obligations. Article 6 of the convention therefore obliges all States Parties "in a position to do so" to provide cooperation and assistance to other States Parties. For Lebanon to meet its target of clearing all cluster munitions, it needs the widest possible cooperation and assistance by all countries, in accordance with their respective resources and capabilities. We hope that some countries make pledges of funding this week so that we clear all cluster.

As for us as a state party, in 2011, the LMAC trained teams from both Sudan and Iraq on Quality control and MRE and we stand ready to technically assist any country that approaches us.

Thank you