



Assistance and Cooperation

Tuesday 17 April 2012

Mr./Ms. Coordinator,

I am delivering the following statement on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action, comprising 14 UN entities involved in mine action.

The United Nations remains committed to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the humanitarian imperatives that drive this process forward. I would like to recall that Mine Action refers to the social, economic and environmental impact of mines and ERW, including unexploded sub-munitions¹. Mine action, and therefore Cooperation and Assistance, encompasses not only activities related to clearance and removal of mines and ERW but also risk education, victim assistance, and stockpile destruction, amongst others.

In addition, to realize the commitments that we all have made as partners under this Convention, it is essential to encourage a flow of resources to where support is needed most from those in a position to lend their assistance. Today has demonstrated that the time is ripe to cement a dialogue and decision-making structure that fosters International Cooperation and Assistance. More work remains to be done to ensure that the Convention reaches its full potential in offering an adequate platform for identifying areas for possible collaboration and support. In this vein, it is very encouraging to see that such useful initiatives are already being undertaken by the Coordinators, Spain and Mexico, with the collation of existing best practices in order to guide these efforts forward.

¹ *IMAS 04.10: Glossary of mine action terms, definitions and abbreviations..* The same IMAS clarifies this point when indicating that mine action comprises the following five complementary groups of activities: (a) mine risk education; (b) humanitarian demining, including survey, mapping, marking and clearance; (c) victim assistance, including rehabilitation and reintegration; (d) stockpile destruction; and (e) advocacy.

On the ground, the United Nations remains equally committed to providing and facilitating assistance to States in addressing the pervasive humanitarian impact of these indiscriminate weapons. Through its Completion Initiative, the UN has already begun identifying the levels of funding needed to conclude the work in those countries where it is undertaking ongoing clearance operations. Our agencies continue to provide capacity development and technical advisory support to national mine action agencies responsible for the clearance of cluster sub-munitions in affected areas across the globe.

Another area of support is South-South and triangular cooperation. For example, UNDP and the Croatian Mine Action Centre are exploring possibilities for a Mine Risk Education Training project in Libya. As a State that continues to receive donor funding to deal with its own contamination, Croatia now finds itself in position to impart its own experiences and knowledge to benefit others in a similar situation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As the UN is developing a new strategy for our assistance and support to mine action, including national mine action efforts, there are several lessons and challenges to recall from our progress so far. In particular, I would like to highlight the following points borne out of the survey undertaken evaluating progress made towards our Strategic Objectives, as set out by the UN Mine Action Strategy 2006 – 2010:

- a) Globally, clear and unequivocal success has been achieved in reducing the numbers of deaths and injuries by more than 50% ².
- b) When mine action priorities are integrated into national development and reconstruction plans, clearing land has a multiplier effect by not only reducing deaths and injuries, but also promoting economic development³.

² Strategic Objective 1: Reduction of death and injury by at least 50%. Based on data and analysis, the Survey concludes that UN mine action has directly contributed to a 52.5 percent reduction in global casualty rates (including death and injury), although the incidence of death and injuries increased between 2009 and 2010 due to increase violence and insecurity in Afghanistan and Somalia. This reduction of casualty rates applies also to deminers, except for the case of Afghanistan between 2009 and 2010.

³ Strategic Objective 2: Mitigate the risk to community livelihoods and expand freedom of movement for at least 80 percent of the most seriously affected communities. The global clearance

- c) Whilst we continue to see encouraging results borne out of the UN Mine Action Strategy, the inclusion of gender focal points into mine action planning has not demonstrated an impact on programming or casualty reduction. The increase in victim assistance services has also not been matched with an increase in the number of victims receiving services⁴.
- d) There are clear signs of successful integration of mine action into national plans and improvement in national institutional capacity⁵. Within these cases, however, this same trend has not been observed in mine action planning and procurement. These are areas where more international support might be needed.
- e) A rigorous monitoring and evaluation process is required to accurately assess mine action progress, for which measurable concrete indicators should be established.

The United Nations Mine Action Team expects to take these recommendations into account during the elaboration of the next UN mine action strategy, in consultation with affected states, donors and civil society partners. We remain committed to drawing on our extensive field experience to inform the way in which we assist States in the future.

Finally, we would like to highlight the broader approach which the United Nations now takes of the Completion Initiative. The Completion Initiative seeks to accelerate mine

rates of at-risk communities demonstrates an impressive progress towards increased freedom of movement and access to physical and social infrastructure. The analysis highlights that clearance goes beyond creating an environment in which productive economic activities can occur : **it saves lives.**

⁴ Strategic Objective 3: Integration of mine action needs into national development and reconstruction plans and budgets in at least 15 countries, the survey reveals the increased integration of mine action priorities and goals into national development and reconstruction. This results in large beneficial impacts, including its correlation with the reduction of casualty rates. The analysis also shows that gender integration into mine action underscores a growing trend in gender sensitivity and awareness in mine action programming and that there has been an increase in general victim assistance services.

⁵ Strategic Objective 4: Assist the development of national institutions to manage the landmine/ERW threat, and at the same time prepare for residual response capacity in at least 15 countries, evidence shows that national institutional capacity has increased over time, although little data is kept on the trajectory of national institutions. The analysis suggests that when national authorities engage in a programming area, institutional capacity is increased and has resulted in greater national efficacy, specifically in the areas of survivor assistance, mine risk education, quality assurance and media information.

action clearance activities in countries where a concerted effort and a relatively small investment will solve the mine/ERW problem within the stipulated deadlines. Members of the United Nations Mine Action Team are also working closely with donors of the Mine Action Support Group to ensure a robust and coordinated approach is taken to the Completion Initiative.

In our view, the completion of clearance does not mean the end of the mine action objectives as a whole. This term applies to all obligations under the CCM. By means of further broadening its scope to make it relevant beyond clearance alone, we are looking into the possibility of adding stockpile destruction to this project.

To further illustrate the importance of this holistic approach, for example, in Albania, once their clearance objectives were fulfilled, the level of assistance that they received for Mine Action fell dramatically, even as they continued to address residual concerns related to victim assistance. This highlights the need to adopt a holistic perspective when considering Cooperation and Assistance, as outlined in my introduction. As such, we look forward to working with States to assist them in identifying and addressing challenges to complying with all provisions of the CCM.

Esteemed Colleagues,

In this session alone, a series of resourcing challenges has been outlined to address immediate national concerns, not to mention potential areas where technical knowledge and experience would be of equally great value. The United Nations welcomes the sharing of such information from States experiencing challenges with regards to fulfilling their obligations, and strongly encourages other States to follow this example throughout the course of the week. As captured in Article 6, the burden must not be carried by affected and low-income States alone, and it must be highlighted that the most important step in this process is the identification and sharing of information of requirements, not only by States requesting assistance, but by the donors themselves.

Thank you. Mr./Ms. Coordinator