

Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
Technical Cooperation and Assistance
Statement by Mr. Robert Watkins, UNDP's Resident Representative, Lebanon
16 September 2011

Excellencies, Ladies, Gentlemen, Friends

During this session, we were presented with the gaps that states have identified, as they evaluate the scale and cost of the tasks ahead, to comply with the obligations set out last year by the Vientiane Action Plan. Much of what we have heard so far will demand a great deal from those affected states in terms of their own resources and capacities; however, as captured in Article 6 of the convention, this burden should not be carried by affected states alone.

The exceptional standard that has been set by the CCM will only be achieved through the sharing of financial assistance and technical knowledge and expertise. To fulfil the commitments that we have made to those affected by these indiscriminate and inhumane weapons, we must ensure that the problem of explosive remnants of war is firmly rooted within the wider framework of development and its related planning, programming, and budgeting process.

As a community of like-minded states and organisations with a greatly varied pool of resources, we are in a unique position to support a steady flow of relevant experience and knowledge to where it is needed most. As an organisation committed to this very principle, UNDP will continue to address these urgent needs through its Completion Initiative. By providing realistic and attainable projections for funding, this Initiative will allow affected states to fulfil their obligations under Articles 3, 4, 5 of the Convention. It will also give states that are in a position to provide assistance the opportunity to follow through with the commitments they have made with respect to Article 6 of the Convention, obliging them to provide comprehensive support inter alia in the areas of clearance, stockpile destruction and victim assistance.

As such, we encourage all those in the position to do so, to support the implementation and the acceleration of clearance and stockpile destruction and the expansion of the coverage of services for victims and survivors, enabling affected low income states to fulfil the obligations of the Convention. We kindly invite the esteemed delegates of this floor to indicate their commitments to implementation of the Convention's provisions in those countries and territories contaminated with cluster submunitions, where real progress is an achievable and realistic goal.

For example, as General Fehmi has outlined earlier, Lebanon has developed a 10-year mine action strategy to comply with Article 4 obligations of the CCM and the clearance of all other explosive remnants of war, for which resources will be required to ensure its timely implementation.

UNDP has also worked closely with Lao PDR, the most heavily bombed country in the world, to institutionalise concerted efforts to clear land, increase awareness and provided assistance to survivors. The 10-year strategic plan developed by UXO Lao and the National Regulatory Authority identified a number of funding gaps, in order to achieve the necessary results by 2019.

Although yet not a party of the convention, Vietnam has identified similar gaps, where, as with the states I have just mentioned, vast amounts of contaminated land continue to pose a real threat to livelihoods and hinder opportunities for economic growth.

UNDP and sister agencies are working in support of mine action programmes to eradicate the threat of unexploded cluster submunitions in 21 of the 28 states and territories affected by cluster munitions, either through direct coordination of clearance work or in support of national clearance, risk reduction and victim assistance efforts.

UNDP stands ready to facilitate this process of technical cooperation and assistance and to work with partners who share the same aim. With its wide network of offices around the world with established frameworks for cooperation with affected states, we hope that our offices can contribute to the successful implementation and universalization of the Convention. With a strong commitment to meet not only gaps identified, but also the country-specific demands for knowledge and technical resources, we can make an important start at the most vital stage of the Convention to date.

Thank you.