

Cooperation and Assistance

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Lebanese delegation I would like to express our sincere appreciation to South Africa as Friend of the President on Cooperation and Assistance, for its relentless coordination efforts.

As set out in Article 6 of the CCM, “each State Party has the right to seek and receive assistance” in fulfilling its obligations under the Convention.

As noted in previous interventions by the Lebanese delegation, Lebanon has been doing its utmost to ensure full and efficient implementation of the Convention in terms of clearance of contaminated areas, care and rehabilitation for victims, and Risk Education.

This can be seen most clearly through the “2011-2020 National Mine Action Strategy”, which, in line with Action #33 of the Vientiane Action Plan sets out how Lebanon intends to meet its obligations within the Convention 10 year deadline.

In the spirit of the Convention and the Vientiane Action Plan, this Strategy was the result of a consultative strategic analysis and planning process involving not only representatives of

concerned Ministries, but also other stakeholders including civil society representatives.

In order to enable implementation of this Strategy, the Government of Lebanon has allocated around 6.5 million USD on Mine Action, which includes salary contributions, equipment and running costs for the LMAC. In addition to this contribution, the Ministry of Health of Lebanon provides medical care to survivors and the Ministry of Social Affairs contributes to Risk Education through its trained health and teaching personnel.

Lebanon has been working closely with both national and international NGOs to help implement our commitments under the CCM, as set out in Action #34 of the Vientiane Action Plan.

Mine Risk Education and Victim Assistance are implemented solely by national NGOs, while demining is being implemented by well-established international NGOs and recently formed Lebanese agencies.

This collaboration with civil society extends to assisting with the accreditation process for clearance operators, providing tax exemptions for import of technical equipment provided by international NGOs, and facilitating visa processing of international staff.

LMAC, in partnership with international NGOs, is also working to foster the transfer of responsibilities from international to national technical and management personnel, as it is expected that when Mine Action is implemented independently from direct international technical support, cost effectiveness will improve.

Lebanon has responded to Action #29 of the Vientiane Action Plan by mobilizing resources through innovative sources of financing and reaching out to the private sector.

LMAC has begun a very successful partnership with BLOM Bank, one of the oldest and largest banks in Lebanon. One feature of this partnership was the launching of a credit card that combines the benefits of MasterCard, with the ability to donate to the Lebanese Mine Action Center.

This partnership therefore guarantees long term income for demining activities in Lebanon. BLOM bank also funded a 1 million USD nationwide Risk Education campaign, which helped address some immediate needs.

One of the main aims of Lebanon's Presidency of the CCM will be to increase communication and cooperation nationally, regionally and internationally on Mine Action best practices and results; and improve the mobilization of resources from the Lebanese private sector, the Lebanese community abroad, and international sources. Lebanon is a strong advocate for the

universalization of the CCM, especially within the region, and as set out in the National Strategy, we aim to position the Lebanese Mine Action programme as a model in the region to help exchange information with other affected states and share good practices.

Despite all these efforts, Lebanon continues to seek the necessary technical, financial and material support of states “who are in a position to do so”, as is their obligation under Article 6 of the CCM. We therefore hope that such states will respond positively to the needs of Lebanon, in particular by taking heed of Action #38 of the Vientiane Action Plan, which encourages states to “promptly assist States Parties that have requested support” and to “strive to ensure continuity, predictability and sustainability of resource commitments”.

International funding on Mine Action to Lebanon has been decreasing since its peak in 2002 when over 41,000,000 USD was provided. Even after the 2006 conflict when an estimated 4.2 million cluster munitions were used on Lebanon, donations did not increase, and in 2009 international donations only accounted for 21,000,000 USD. This has forced LMAC to reduce its demining capacity and victim assistance efforts, and to let go qualified technical and management civilian personnel.

To help facilitate resource mobilization, Lebanon has committed in the National Strategy, to re-enact the

International Support Group, as well as the Inter-Ministerial Advisory Committee. This will help to ensure resource coordination, management and transparency in our reporting obligations. In addition, and as set out in the National Strategy, regular independent evaluations will take place on every aspect of Mine Action.

On behalf of the Lebanese delegation, I would like to express my most heartfelt gratitude for all the cooperation and assistance already provided by donors, and I look forward to working with you all in the future to ensure we reach our target of a Lebanon free from cluster munitions within the ten-year timeframe set out.

Thank you.