

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, let us dedicate the work of our conference to all the victims of cluster munitions.

Today, on behalf of the Lebanese Delegation, I would like to express our appreciation to Australia, as Friend of the President on Clearance and Risk reduction education, for its tireless works in coordinating this matter. Allow me also to share with you a short update on Lebanon's efforts to meet its obligations under article 4 of the convention and to implement the provisions of the Vientiane Action Plan related to "Clearance and destruction of cluster munitions remnants and risk education activities".

The Vientiane Action Plan under article Action#12 calls on affected States Parties to "identify as precisely as possible locations and size of all cluster munitions contaminated areas". In this regard, I would like to inform you that the LMAC through technical and non-technical surveys identified 1,277 strikes that contaminated approximately 54.9 square kilometers of land and affected over 1 million people, who represent 25% of the population.

Lebanon is contaminated by almost all types of cluster munitions especially, M42, M46,M77,M85, BLU63, MK118, M43.

As of July 2011, out of the 54.9 million m<sup>2</sup> cluster munitions contaminated land, two thirds of the contaminated land has been released, 462 areas covering 18,241,828 m<sup>2</sup> must be cleared.

The LMAC have conducted technical and non-technical surveys, while newly emerging national actors and well established international NGOs complement the clearance work. Available assets from all operators are pooled by the LMAC and tasked to ensure the highest possible efficiency.

At present the total clearance capacity in Lebanon is 25 teams.

In Lebanon, a highly densely populated area, where contaminated land denies access to livelihoods, the vast majority of contaminated area is high and medium priority. Land release has focused primarily and firstly on clearing roads, the rehabilitation of infrastructures and houses, to allow for the prompt return of displaced population. Land is released upon request from landowners and municipalities. Post clearance survey results show that land is put into use immediately after release in over 97% of tasks.

In relation to action 11 in the Vientiane Action Plan we are happy to report that LMAC is taking all feasible measures to prevent further civilian casualties by effectively preventing unintentional civilian access to cluster munitions contaminated areas. All areas with cluster bombs are mapped and maintained in LMAC database.

Concerning risk education, activities in Lebanon are evolving, from the provision of traditional awareness-raising sessions on the consequences of unexploded ordnance to more complex and targeted processes focused on behavior change. Mine risk education campaigns have been initiated all over the country since 1997. Under the coordination and close supervision of LMAC, MRE activities have reached directly over 1 million school children, farmers, and general population using appropriately targeted materials and approaches. Television broadcasts were also instrumental in conveying safety messages.

I would like to inform you that The Lebanese Army: the Lebanon Mine Action Centre has developed a strategic plan that aims to contribute to the achievement of Lebanon development objectives and to guide the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. This plan is the result of a consultative strategic analysis and planning process involving

representatives of concerned Ministries and other stakeholders including civil society representatives. It is based on a review of the substantial progress made towards achieving the expected End-State, which was guiding the 2008 – 2012 and 2009-2013 Long Term Plans. It is informed by existing accurate and exhaustive data, in particular on aspects of the mine contamination in Lebanon, and mine victim assistance needs.

We will do our best to fully implement this strategic plan; however, the greatest need in Lebanon is greater levels of funding to allow an expansion of LMAC and other operators so that more teams can be deployed.

At this point, I would like to commend Australia for the excellent paper they have prepared on the application of all available methods for implementation of Article 4. In our view the paper effectively and accurately presents current knowledge of how best to address the Article 4 challenges. I fully support the approach in the paper.

Before concluding and on behalf of the Lebanese People, I would like to welcome you once again to what I hope you would consider as your second home. We Lebanese, with our cultural diversity, have a national solidarity and we are strongly linked and connected to our land and to our human values. We are determined to always move forward and to live with dignity. This our destiny. We will never fail; we will never stop

standing up, and looking to build a better future. We are deeply committed to our children wellbeing and to the generations to come.

Finally, I would like, on behalf of the Lebanese Delegation, to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to donor countries and International organizations for their continued assistance and support to our clearance and risk reduction education programmes.

Together for a Safer Life

Thank you for your attention