



## **United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action**

### **Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

#### **Statement on Clearance and Risk Reduction**

##### **Agenda item 10(c)**

**San José, 3 September 2014**

*Delivered by Ms. Agnès Marcaillou, Director, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)*

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action<sup>1</sup> (IACG-MA), comprising 14 United Nations entities involved in mine action.

The United Nations reiterates that clearance can be achieved quickly if the necessary resources are available and if best practices for efficient and effective clearance are implemented. We welcome that the majority of States Parties, as well as some States not yet party to the Convention, have taken measures to clear areas contaminated by cluster munitions. The United Nations would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Norway and Mauritania for its declaration of compliance.

The United Nations recognizes that some States are faced with limited resources with which to assist victims, provide risk education, clear contaminated areas, destroy stockpiles, and build national capacities. Switzerland and Lao People's Democratic Republic, as Coordinators on clearance and risk reduction, have rightly reiterated that the appropriate use of resources can accelerate effective clearance and risk reduction, in particular through best practices in survey methodologies and priority-setting mechanisms. Lao PDR, supported by UNDP, is now in the process of commencing full implementation of such mechanisms. Similarly, the United Nations General Assembly resolution (A/RES/68/72) urges States with areas under their jurisdiction or control that contain explosive remnants of war to identify contaminated areas, implement risk reduction measures, including risk education, to protect civilians, and employ land release techniques in the most efficient manner possible.

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<sup>1</sup> The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) / United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) (Observer status), and the World Bank (Observer status).

In order to enable the progress of clearance activities, the United Nations encourages donors to practice Good Humanitarian Donorship and commit to flexible, multi-year funding, which would assist States, NGOs, United Nations entities, and operators to plan activities in advance and achieve the obligations of the Convention quickly and efficiently.

Mr. President,

The United Nations remains committed to supporting efforts by States Parties as well as States not yet party to the Convention to clear cluster munitions contamination.

As an example of best practice, with support from UNDP, the Lebanon Mine Action Center (LMAC) adapted its land release procedures so that, in 2014 alone, over 2 square kilometres were released through non-technical survey, reducing the cost of clearance by 99%. UNMAS is also providing equipment to operators involved in the clearance of cluster munitions in Lebanon. As a consequence, hundreds of people benefit from enhanced food security and increased income from agriculture and food processing.

In the territory of Western Sahara east of the berm, clearing cluster strike areas is a priority. Over five square kilometres of land were cleared and released to local communities between September 2012 and September 2013 by UNMAS. This has increased the safety of communities east of the berm, personnel of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, and aid workers operating in the region.

In over 30 countries across the globe, the United Nations continued its support to risk reduction by implementing a variety of projects including community liaison, injury surveillance, public information, education and training.

UNICEF supports risk education in countries affected by cluster munitions, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cambodia, Chad, Eritrea, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. In Lebanon, UNICEF conducted a Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices survey on the risk related to indiscriminate weapons among 1,200 children. As a result updated education material was developed and delivered to 87,000 children. In keeping with the principle that all children have the same rights, UNICEF provides assistance to children and their families and communities in countries not party to the Convention. Preparations are now underway to undertake Risk Education in Ukraine.

In 2014, UNMAS partnered with UNIFIL, the Lebanese Mine Action Centre, and non-governmental organizations to provide hundreds of school children with risk reduction education through 4 April Mine Awareness Day events.

In Afghanistan, UNMAS has supported the clearance of more than 31 square kilometres of land contaminated by cluster munitions. However, seven square kilometres are still contaminated. In order to ensure the safety of people living close to these

contaminated areas, UNMAS partnered with the national mine action programme to provide risk reduction information to the affected population.

In South Sudan, UNMAS cleared 670 hazardous areas containing cluster munitions, releasing land to communities and allowing for the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance. While there has been significant progress in removing legacy contamination from the previous civil war, it is worthwhile to recall that in Resolution 2155 Security Council Members noted their “serious concerns” about “reports of the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions in Jonglei State in February 2014” and urged all parties to refrain from such use in the future.

Members of the IACG also echo the words of the United Nations Secretary-General who has condemned the recent use of cluster munitions during the current crisis.

In closing, the United Nations notes its appreciation of the leadership brought by Lao DPR and Switzerland to clearance and risk reduction.

I thank you, Mr. President.

