



First Review MEETING OF STATE PARTIES
TO THE CONVENTION OF CLUSTER MUNITIONS
Croatia , 7-11 September, 2015

Statement by Lebanon on International Cooperation

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mines and Cluster Munitions continue to threaten the lives of millions of persons around the globe. Around 26 countries are estimated to be impacted by cluster munitions remnants. Despite the lack of a credible estimate on the total number of cluster munitions spread worldwide, estimates are alarming. To deal with such a huge catastrophe, high levels of cooperation among impacted countries and state parties are crucial.

In Lebanon, we consider it as a core obligation to cooperate with other states to lessen the impact of cluster munitions through all means available. We always participate in international platforms and workshops that help us build our capacities further. These workshops have enabled us to always keep our knowledge, structures, and operations updated. To ensure that we are able to maintain high level cooperation with all countries based on international standards, Lebanon is currently updating its National Mine Action Standards. We are also adding new modules that were not present in our NMAS version 1 as well as relevant modules that are not present in the IMAS such as MVA. We are willing to share our experience in this domain with any interested country.

On another hand, we also organize and host our share of platforms and workshops. Lebanon organizes an annual International Support Group meeting for all donors, ambassadors, and civil society organizations concerned with mine action in Lebanon to network and share ideas. Moreover, we are committed to participate in the regular meetings held through the Arabic Outreach Programme (AOP) to discuss the needs and priorities of Arabic speaking countries. From 2014 till now, Lebanon hosted three workshops for the Arabic-speaking countries.

In fact, Lebanon has been playing a key role amongst the Neighboring and Arab Speaking Countries countries in Mine Action, sharing its knowledge and skills. Keen on formalizing this role and institutionalizing its operations, Lebanon, and with the advisory support of the French Army, has initiated the process to build a Regional School for Humanitarian Demining in Lebanon (RSHDL). The facilities will be ready in the near future. Through this school, Lebanon will be able to fortify its team as well as provide support to reinforce the know-how of Neighboring and Arabic speaking countries that

will benefit from strengthened efforts aimed at aiding them to achieve freedom from the impact of mines/ Explosive Remnants of War (ERW).

To further clarify and promote the role of the RSHDL, during 2015, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Lebanon Mine Action Center (LMAC) and the Geneva Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) outlining terms of cooperation for the Management and Coordination of the Arabic Outreach Programme (AOP) for Mine Action. It is planned that by 2017 the LMAC will take charge the management of the AOP. Despite sincere efforts and indisputable willingness to invest our modest capabilities to this end, financial support will be critical to be able to launch the program up to the standards.

To us, this MoU further highlights our commitment to combat the problem of cluster munitions. It is one of the many tools we will seek to engage in to highlight regional and international cooperation. We remain open to any other possibilities of cooperation that would enable the mine impacted community to jointly overcome this predicament. We take the opportunity to also thank our partners and the donor community who, whenever needed, and within the means available, provided expertise and funding enabling us to move forward. We hope that such support will witness an increase in the years to come.

Thank you.