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United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

Third Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Statement under agenda item 9 (d)

Explosive Ordnance Risk Education

Vientiane, Tuesday, 15 September 2026

Delivered by XXXX

Mr. President,¹

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA) comprising the United Nations entities involved in mine action.²

Excellencies,

I would like to start by welcoming and supporting the statement of the EORE Advisory Group statement – a key coalition of partners committed to furthering Risk Education and saving lives in contexts of Explosive Ordnance contamination.

As we discuss the importance of protecting civilians from the threat of explosive remnants of war, I would like share a story of hope from Gaza that illustrates the impact of Explosive Ordnance Risk Education at the individual and community level. It is the story of Yousef, a child

¹ H.E. Thongsavan PHOMVIHANE, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR.

² The United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action consists of twelve United Nations Departments and Offices of the Secretariat, specialized agencies, funds and programmes: the United Nations Mine Action Service of the Department of Peace Operations, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) is an observer.



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whose life may have been changed, and possibly saved, through a simple but powerful risk education session.

Yousef is a displaced child living in Al-Nuseirat Camp. Like many children, he used to visit his family's destroyed home in Deir al Balah almost every day with his father, brother, and cousin. He would play around the area and collect items from the rubble, not fully understanding the risks.

During one visit, they found what they thought was a piece of metal. It later turned out to be an explosive remnant of war. Yousef continued going back to the area, still ignoring what this strange item was and unaware of how dangerous it could be. The outcome could have been tragic.

After attending explosive ordnance risk education sessions, things started to change. Yousef became aware of the risks around him and began to act more carefully in his daily life. He also shared what he learned with others and advised his friends not to pick up suspicious objects. Now aware of certain areas near where he lives and plays are considered particularly contaminated and dangerous, he advised his friends to avoid these unsafe areas.

His parents noticed a clear difference in his behaviour since Yousef attended the sessions. They were surprised to see this especially since their own efforts to guide him away from these dangers had not been as effective. The sessions helped Yousef better understand the risks and take them seriously. Today, Yousef is not only keeping himself safe, but also helping others do the same.



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This is the power, relevance and importance of Explosive Ordnance Risk Education.

In Gaza, Nigeria, Syria, Lao PDR, Cambodia and other countries, EORE is helping children and adults make safer decisions in environments heavily contaminated by explosive remnants of war. Yousef's story demonstrates how EORE can generate protective effects beyond the individual and how it can contribute to wider community awareness. It is a story mirrored across tens of context and hundreds of thousands if not millions of people.

Risk education also goes beyond awareness and behavioural change. As displaced persons and returnees head back to their homes to build their lives and livelihoods, EORE sessions are a venue for explosive ordnance to be reported to community volunteers, to bring communities back together, to help victims in the community, and their subsequent referral to Victim Assistance services.

RiTargeted, culturally specific and easy to access EORE can succeed where general risk messaging from families or communities may not be sufficient. Prevention is an essential component of humanitarian mine action but is often under resourced. Children are a particularly vulnerable group and a priority audience.

The United Nations invites and encourages States Parties to continue to prioritize EORE which saves lives by changing behaviour before an accident occurs.

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