



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

### **12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention**

#### **Statement on Clearing Mined Areas**

##### **Agenda item 10 (b)**

**Geneva, 6 December 2012**

**Delivered by Ms. Agnès Marcaillou, Director, UNMAS  
on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action (IACG-MA)**

I am delivering the following statement on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action (IACG-MA), comprising 14 UN partners involved in mine action.

Because the Mine Ban Convention is about “the people”, about “saving their lives”, mine clearance is of utmost importance to the UN whilst the States bear the primary responsibility to clear mined areas and fulfil their Article 5 obligations.

It is in this spirit that the United Nations congratulates once again Denmark, Guinea-Bissau and Jordan for fulfilling their obligations under Article 5 of the Convention.

The United Nations also congratulates Uganda for the completion of its obligations under Article 5 and welcomes the announcement of Article 5 completion made this week by the Republic of the Congo, as the non-technical survey conducted recently has not identified any presence of mines in suspected areas.

The United Nations mine action supports mine clearance and risk education in over twenty States Parties to the Convention<sup>1</sup> in addition to a number of non-States Parties and territories.

The United Nations continues to follow closely the consideration of the requests for extensions by Afghanistan, Angola, Cyprus and Zimbabwe. Indeed the United Nations is assisting Afghanistan, Angola and Zimbabwe, including in documenting their respective requests and we also assist Cyprus in mine action in the context of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). The United Nations would like to reiterate its commitment to support affected countries to comply with their obligations under Article 5, as early as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Afghanistan, Albania (mine free), Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau (mine free), Iraq, Jordan (mine free), Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Philippines, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uganda (mine free), Yemen and Zimbabwe.

The United Nations would like to take this opportunity to highlight that funding is critical to the conduct of clearance operations. Clearance by affected States and the UN alike is adversely impacted by insufficient, unpredictable or ad hoc financial support. Affected states efforts to meet treaty obligations are therefore hampered, as is the assistance that the UN renders. For example, insufficient funding has caused the suspension of operations in Fada, in the North East of Chad and not allowed for the planned technical survey to be completed. Afghanistan, which has been widely praised for its ten-year plan linked to its extension request, cannot implement its plan without sustainable funding. These are but a few examples. Nevertheless, the message is clear. Funding must be provided on a regular, sustained, multi-year and flexible basis in order to allow affected states to fulfil their obligations and for the UN to support and coordinate clearance operations and risk education.

Moreover, the United Nations would like to recall that fulfilment of Article 5 obligations does not mean that clearance activities come to an end. A number of States Parties that have declared themselves free from antipersonnel landmines still face the threats posed by anti-vehicle mines and unexploded ordnance and continue to request additional assistance for clearance. Let us remember the UN Secretary-General's message welcoming further discussion on the humanitarian impact of anti-vehicle mines.

With regard to the discovery of previously unknown mined areas after a state's declaration of completion of Article 5 obligations, the United Nations is of the view that clearance of these areas should begin without delay, to ensure the protection of affected communities. Niger has been identified as one such case where an area contaminated by mines was located near the Libyan border. As mentioned during the last Intersessionals, the UN stands ready to assist Niger in this endeavour.

Lastly, the United Nations considers that all involved in clearance operations and risk education must integrate an age and gender perspective in all plans and programmes to increase the effectiveness of mine action. Mine action appeals, including consolidated humanitarian appeals, the annual Portfolio of Mine Action Projects, launched this week on the E-MINE website, and similar processes, are increasingly using a gender analysis in the elaboration of their projects.

In this regard, the United Nations calls for greater awareness and use of the of the UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes.

Thank you.