



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

13th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Statement on Clearing Mined Areas

Agenda item 11 (b)

Geneva, 4 December 2013

Delivered by UNMAS

on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action (IACG-MA)

Mr President,

I deliver the following statement on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action (IACG-MA), comprised of the United Nations Departments, Agencies, Funds, and Programmes involved in mine action.

Mine clearance is at the core of States' Parties compliance with both the letter and spirit of the Convention, and an unprecedented amount of mined and hazardous areas have been cleared. The completion of mine clearance is what ultimately eliminates the humanitarian, socioeconomic and environmental threat posed by antipersonnel mines.

States bear the primary responsibility to clear mined areas and to fulfil their Article 5 obligations. We once again congratulate Bhutan and Venezuela for declaring they have done so in the period since the 12MSP. The United Nations also congratulates Hungary and Germany.

Thirty-two States Parties to the Convention are, according to their own reporting, yet to fulfil their Article 5 obligations. The United Nations mine action actively supports mine clearance and risk education in over 20 States Parties, in addition to a number of non-States Parties and territories.

The United Nations also closely follows the consideration of the requests for extensions by Chad, Mozambique, Niger, Serbia, Sudan and Turkey submitted this year. The United Nations have been actively involved in assisting countries in the process of preparing their extension requests.

The notable example is Afghanistan who submitted a widely acclaimed request last year, and who will successfully achieve the targets of the first year of their plan. In this regard, the United Nations also commends Mozambique for the rapid progress in clearing affected areas and we are confident that Mozambique will be able to clear newly discovered mined areas in order to complete their Article 5 obligations as soon as possible, and by the end of 2014.

The United Nations is also assisting other heavily affected States in the preparation of their extension requests for decisions in 2014, notably Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for instance, the Mine Action Service supports the National Authorities, including on a National Survey on contamination and the preparation of an Article 5 extension request.

Mr President,

We take this opportunity to encourage all States to meet their deadlines in a timely manner. Since 2008, 41 out of 161 State Parties have submitted requests for extensions. While applying for an extension is a legitimate and justified demarche under Article 5, more could be done to clear landmines within scheduled timeframes.

The United Nations is deeply concerned at the increased number of extension requests and considers that States Parties' compliance with their obligation is crucial not only for the credibility of the Convention, but also the credibility of international humanitarian law as a whole.

In this respect, the IACG-MA joins the Secretary General in urging all mine-affected States to take full ownership of their landmine problem and increase efforts to meet their obligations within the Convention's deadlines. Without doubt, mine action is people-driven, with dividends measured in lives saved, roads and airports cleared, schools reopened, and land returned to agricultural use.

As we approach the Third Review Conference in Mozambique, we begin contemplating what remains to be done to make the goal of this Convention a reality.

Mr President,

One of the key challenges to meet the clearance obligations is funding. Clearance efforts by affected States with the support of the United Nations are hampered by insufficient, unpredictable and ad hoc financial support. Funding must be provided on a regular, multi-year and flexible basis in order to allow affected states to fulfil their obligations and for the United Nations to support affected states in this endeavour.

Age and gender perspectives must be integrated in all mine operations and risk education plans. The Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018 expressly emphasizes the need to mainstream gender across mine action. There is some progress. For example, in 2012, over 70% of all mine action projects submitted under the consolidated humanitarian appeals had significant potential to contribute to gender equality.

The United Nations also strives to mainstream gender and age considerations in the approach to monitoring and evaluation of the progress towards meeting the objectives of its UN Strategy.

The United Nations calls for even greater awareness and the use of the United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes in pursuit of greater mainstreaming of gender into projects, planning and prioritization activities.

Mr President,

Lastly, as raised by 1997 Nobel Prize Winner, Jody Williams, at the opening session of this Conference, lets make “Commit to Complete” the theme of the Third Review Conference in Maputo.

Thank you.