

Statement of the UN Mine Action Team on the agenda item on "clearing mined fields"

21 November 2007

Your Royal Highness, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

This statement is delivered on behalf of the United Nations Mine Action Team, comprising 14 UN Departments, Agencies, Funds and Programmes. As a matter of clarification, I wish to emphasize that all statements from UN entities during this meeting are made on behalf of the UN Mine Action Team.

Clearing mined-areas (Actions #17-28 of the Nairobi Action Plan)

The United Nations Mine Action Team is working together with governments and mine action organizations to advance demining by assisting national programmes to adopt new approaches that ensure more efficient use of resources and the release of more land in less time. We are gratified that yesterday's discussions under agenda item 12 examined land release as a practical means to overcome challenges in the implementation of Article 5.

With regards to the identification of all affected areas, during the past year the United Nations has cooperated with others to provide assistance to Angola, Guinea Bissau, Malawi, Mauritania, Senegal, Sudan and Uganda with survey activities.

The United Nations Development Programme's Completion Initiative to assist States Parties with a relatively modest anti-personnel mine problem to develop a national strategy to meet their Article 5 obligations in collaboration with donors and implementing partners is making progress in Albania, Malawi, Mauritania and Zambia.

Also during this reporting period, the United Nations has contributed to the development of national mine action plans in Afghanistan, Uganda, Tajikistan and Yemen, as well as refining or updating national mine action strategies in Mauritania, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal.

In the area of mine risk education, new projects supported by the United Nations are taking place in Nepal and have been intensified in Lebanon in addition to programmes in some 20 other countries. UNICEF and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining have recently concluded work on a 'Guide to Marking in Mine Action' and initiated another study on approaches to community liaison. UNICEF contributed to the training of mine risk education personnel and/or to the development and implementation of risk reduction programmes in Angola, Burundi, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chad, Ethiopia, Iraq and other 16 countries.

Thank you Mr. President