

UNMAS Director's Statement for the Member States and other Stakeholders Announcements  
Plenary

Harbiye Auditorium (ICC)

World Humanitarian Summit

Monday 23 May 2016

Istanbul, Turkey

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am the Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service, UNMAS. Since its establishment in 1997, UNMAS has led, coordinated and implemented humanitarian mine action in conflict and post-conflict settings globally.

Today, I commit UNMAS to implementing the Secretary-General's Agenda for Humanity.

Great progress has been made towards eliminating the threat of landmines. And yet, in today's conflicts, international humanitarian law is too often shockingly ignored; the weaponry used is increasingly targeting civilian populations. They bear the brunt of unprecedented volumes and complexity of deadly contamination as they are exposed to an ever-increasing range of explosive hazards, including improvised explosive devices, unexploded cluster munitions, bombs, shells and rockets.

Today, I commit UNMAS to greater efficiency, greater transparency, and greater innovative thinking to increase the positive impact of its programmes.

You may have heard the tragic story of Lamiya Hachi Bashar, a Yazidi woman, who thought the worst was over when she finally escaped enslavement by Da'esh in Iraq. But as Lamiya fled, one of her friends stepped on a landmine, killing her and another friend, and leaving Lamiya blind and severely disfigured<sup>1[1]</sup> Globally, every day, more than ten people fall victim to landmines and other explosive remnants of war<sup>2[2]</sup> .

UNMAS commits to putting “protection” at the centre of its work. UNMAS commits to having its work driven by the needs and wants of affected people and communities at the starting point of humanitarian planning and programming.

UNMAS commits to being a voice for the girls, women, boys and men who are survivors of landmines and other explosive remnants of war, including improvised explosive devices.

Explosive hazards kill and injure civilians; they impede the return of displaced populations and block the delivery of humanitarian assistance; they inhibit peacebuilding and stabilization; humanitarian mine action cannot be overlooked. Last April, the United Nations Secretary-General stated that “Mine action is critical for effective humanitarian response in conflict and post-conflict settings”.

Mine action is a significant tangible part of the solution to many humanitarian problems.

Humanitarian mine action must be featured in the commitments of this Summit<sup>3[3]</sup> .

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