



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
18th Meeting of the States Parties of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Statement under agenda item 9 (b) Clearance and risk education

18 November 2020

Delivered by Mr. Bruno Donat, Chief, Geneva office, UNMAS

Mr. President,¹

I have the pleasure to deliver the following statement on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA).²

Excellencies,

Clearance is a core obligation for States Parties under the Convention and a priority of the Oslo Action Plan. It protects civilian populations from the threat of anti-personnel mines, enables development and contributes to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The United Nations supports affected States in implementing clearance-related actions in a timely manner. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has made our collective efforts this year more challenging, causing the temporary stand down of

¹ H.E. Osman Abufatima Adam Mohammed, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sudan to the United Nations in Geneva.

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) and the World Bank are observers.



clearance operations in many countries and delaying the submission of transparency reports and extension requests. However, operations have resumed in most contexts, which is testament to the adaptability of the sector and the perseverance of the women and men working hard to make areas safer for communities.

The pandemic is certainly not the only challenge to clearance efforts. The use by non-State actors of improvised explosive devices that function as anti-personnel mines has significantly increased in several State Parties, restricting mobility and curtailing humanitarian access. It is all the more important that States Parties affected by such contamination apply all of the Convention's obligations to it, particularly during survey and clearance, as stated in the Oslo Action Plan.

The section of the Oslo Action Plan dedicated to risk education reflects the critical role these activities play in protecting civilians from the risks posed by anti-personnel mines. In spite of the pandemic, the United Nations has worked with affected States and civil society partners to accelerate the use of digital technologies and radio platforms for risk education activities in innovative ways. In Sudan and Somalia, for example, the Mine Action Service has included WHO messaging in risk education programs to promote prevention practices like personal hygiene and social distancing.

Effective clearance and risk education must reflect gender, age and diversity considerations. While many implementers now employ female teams in clearance efforts or designate women as focal points to report contamination, the inclusion of gender considerations extends to all stages of mine action programming. We invite States to consult the United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes, which illustrate, for instance, how awareness raising materials can be tailored to particular



gender and age groups. This requires the collection and sharing of disaggregated data, as envisaged by the Oslo Action Plan.

Excellencies,

Mine action plays an important role in humanitarian, peace and development initiatives and it is crucial that States that have the capacity to provide assistance continue to do so. Every effort in clearance and risk education is an effort to save lives.

Thank you.