



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
18th Meeting of the States Parties of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
General Exchange of Views
16 November 2020

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

Mr. President,¹

On behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA),² I wish to congratulate you on your leadership as President of the Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and we take this opportunity to commemorate the success of multilateralism in promoting global peace and security.

In the world of Mine Action, no actor can succeed alone. The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention exemplifies the progress that can be achieved through close collaboration and partnerships among States, the United Nations, civil society and the private sector. One-hundred-and-sixty-four States Parties to the Convention are as committed as ever to ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines. Thus, as we

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.



mark the 75th year of the United Nations, we celebrate our continued cooperation to strive towards a mine-free world.

At the Fourth Review Conference in Oslo, States Parties adopted a strong Action Plan to revitalize these efforts. I would like now to highlight some steps the United Nations has taken to support the implementation of the Convention and the Oslo Action Plan.

The United Nations has updated its Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes to incorporate the latest best practices and lessons learned. We hope the Guidelines will assist States Parties and the sector at large to integrate and mainstream gender considerations in all aspects of mine action programming.

The United Nations also ensures that its capacity-building activities are not only driven by the needs of affected States but also closely aligned with the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. In Palestine, for instance, the Mine Action Service assisted in the development of its second annual report and in the compilation of statistics on mine clearance activities in the West Bank. In Colombia, UNMAS assisted the Government to improve sector efficiency and on discussions regarding the establishment of a National Mine Action Platform in line with the Oslo Action Plan.

Mr. President, Excellencies, and colleagues,

Despite the incredible advances we have made in the 23 years since the Convention has first been adopted, challenges remain in our quest for a mine-free world.

Among those, new contamination with improvised explosive devices, which function as anti-personnel mines, ranks among the highest. For example, Nigeria, which



had already declared completion of its clearance obligation, has had to submit a new extension request under Article 5. Contamination with anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature has a devastating impact on civilian populations, among them children, internally displaced persons and refugees.

Insufficient reporting remains an issue in the fields of victim assistance, clearance, and risk education. Many explosive ordnance accidents go unreported, and the extent to which victims receive the assistance they require is unknown. Inadequate knowledge of the extent of contamination further contributes to poor allocation of resources. Affected countries must gather contamination information and establish surveillance systems in order to clear new and legacy contamination and to allow organisations to tailor explosive ordnance risk education.

Finally, the threat of COVID-19 has impacted mine action efforts across the globe. Operations had to be halted, projects were postponed, personnel were stranded, budgets were re-negotiated, and procurement was delayed. However, in the face of this pandemic, personnel quickly adjusted their work plans to assist those living in conflict and post-conflict settings to ensure that the pandemic will not undermine decades of mine action efforts.

Mr. President,

The United Nations will continue to support universalization of this convention and the quick and effective implementation of the Oslo Action Plan.

Before the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, a mine-free world seemed inconceivable. Yet, collectively, we have begun to quite literally clear



the road for humanitarian relief, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development efforts.
Let this progress continue to inspire us all.

Thank you.