

**Mine Action Support Group (MASG)**

**Remarks by Ambassador Robert A. Wood**

**U.S. Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament and U.S. Special Representative for Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) Issues**

**Wednesday, February 6, 13:00**

Thank you Stan, welcome back to Geneva.

We are happy to host you and the Mine Action Support Group (MASG) again this year. The MASG serves a very important role in the international donor community. Our leadership in Mine Action demonstrates the United States' commitment to international peace and security through both foreign assistance and robust diplomacy. And we are not alone; through the MASG and other similar initiatives we can work with like-minded states, civil society, and the UN toward a safer and more peaceful world.

Dialogue and constructive cooperation remain essential to our work in disarmament, arms control, and mine action alike. With multilateral negotiations, even with parties with common interests, it can take a long time for participants to see the fruits of their labors. Discussions on effective implementation in the field, however, can lead to immediate benefits in terms of the safety and security of internally displaced people and refugees in post-conflict areas. Which is why this dialogue, this engagement here this week, while not on disarmament per se but on humanitarian demining, remains vital to the ongoing work of the international community in the field of conventional arms.

But whether we're confronting the challenge of removing IEDs in a post-conflict stabilization setting, clearing landmines or unexploded ordnance left over from wars that ended decades ago, or trying to negotiate language at various multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation fora, the goals are the same. We need to work together as member states, civil society, and international organizations. Indeed the humanitarian mine action community serves as a model for how different actors, whether governmental or non-governmental, can work together toward a common end.

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With that, I want to thank this group for all the hard work you are doing, and all the hard work you have done, to promote international peace and security, and for the opportunity to speak with you today. Thank you.

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