



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

Fourth Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction

Oslo, Norway

28 November 2019

Statement under Agenda Item 7(e) (i): Cooperation and Assistance

Mr. President,¹

It is my pleasure to deliver the following statement on behalf of the 12 members of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA).²

At the opening of the event marking the 20th anniversary of the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention, last March, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Bachelet, stated that the Convention is “an unprecedented association between the UN, States and civil society organisations, and a key pillar of international disarmament and humanitarian law.” Indeed, its Article 6 provides for a strong

¹ H.E. Hans Brattskar, Ambassador of Norway to the UN in Geneva.

² The United Nations Departments and Offices of the Secretariat, specialized agencies, funds and programmes are: 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 (OCHA, 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.



framework for cooperation and assistance to support both the spirit and letter of the Convention.

Today, the United Nations notes with satisfaction that one of the successes of the Convention resides in an increased focus on strengthening national capacities and transitioning towards national ownership; the narrative has changed: affected States are increasingly becoming leaders and partners rather than beneficiaries of external aid.

The United Nations Mine Action Strategy reflects this change of perspective and supports long-term sustainable responses in mine action.

The United Nations advocates that international focus on strengthening national institutions and capacities be geared towards legislative frameworks, identification of national priorities and action plans based on accurate data, upgrading of technical and programme management skills, as well as international resource mobilization. It is equally important to collectively promote greater gender and social inclusion in national mine action efforts.

The United Nations also calls for strengthened collaboration and assistance in support of sound victim assistance national programmes. Insufficient dedicated national capacities, both within government and civil society, have a devastating impact on persons with disability and on the country's socio-economic recovery.

Times have changed indeed:

In Afghanistan, for instance, the transfer of ownership of the mine action programme to governmental institutions was concluded in 2018. There, at the



request of the Government and under the Afghan mine action programme, UNMAS' technical support is now confined to advocacy, resource mobilization, funds management and contracting.

Similarly, the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo manages its programme and has asked UNMAS to provide capacity enhancement in quality assurance and information management.

Some States have become leading examples for others: Tajikistan, previously assisted by the United Nations, is now self-reliant and provides support to other affected States through South-South cooperation.

For affected states, it is worth noting, though, that the transfer of ownership and control over their mine action programme by the United Nations does not mean denying them UN assistance in specific areas of work that they would identify.

In addition to the legal obligations of States Parties under the Convention, this year's draft resolution on "assistance in mine action", adopted by the 4th Committee of the UN General Assembly, urges States to support "national and, where and as appropriate, local programmes, in cooperation with the relevant bodies of the United Nations system and relevant regional, governmental and non-governmental organisations". The draft Oslo Action Plan under States Parties' consideration reinforces calls for enhanced cooperation for the implementation of the Convention obligations, in particular through the use of existing mechanisms.

The United Nations remains committed to providing assistance and facilitating cooperation, where and when necessary, to support States Parties' implementation, in full and in time, of all their international legal obligations under



the Convention. Ultimately, affected States bear the primary responsibility of featuring “mine action” as one of their national priorities.

I thank you.