

MINUTES

MINE ACTION SUPPORT GROUP

MONDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2017

ITALIAN PERMANENT MISSION TO UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

1. WELCOMING REMARKS BY THE CHAIR

The Chair of the MASG, Ambassador Inigo Lambertini, Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations, opened the meeting at 09.30 hours and welcomed the MASG members to the meeting, along with the observer organizations. He also extended a warm welcome to Ms Agnès Marcaillou, Director of UNMAS, and congratulated her on recently being awarded a Global Leadership Award by the UN Foundation.

The Chair then made a series of opening remarks. He started by noting that the MASG was formed in 1998, so this year marks the 20th anniversary of the group. Ambassador Lambertini believed that over the years the MASG has been a valuable place for mine action donors to interact and be informed by the United Nations and other organizations active in the mine action sector. Looking ahead, the Chair was sure that there will be a need for the MASG in the future, as long as mine action continues. He encouraged donors to keep mine action high on their agenda, and to mainstream it into humanitarian, development, and peace and security programmes.

The Chair noted that 2017 also marks 20 years since the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) entered into force and the latest Report of the Secretary-General on Assistance in Mine Action (A/72/226) highlights the increasing impact of conflicts on civilians, particularly the rise in casualties from victim-activated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and explosive remnants of war. The report demonstrates the cross-cutting nature of mine action in preventing conflict and sustaining peace, noting how mine action can act as an important confidence building measure in peace processes and the stabilization of communities in the earliest stages of conflict recovery.

Over the years the MASG has sometimes undertaken a field visit to see first-hand mine action work in affected countries. In May 2017, a MASG delegation travelled to Lebanon to observe mine action operations in the region. The visit familiarized MASG representatives with the humanitarian mine action operations of the Lebanon Mine Action Centre (LMAC) and its partners, including clearance, victim assistance and risk education initiatives. The visit also highlighted UNMAS work with the UN Peacekeeping Mission (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon - UNIFIL) and the troop contributing demining contingents. Ambassador Lambertini thanked UNMAS and the other involved organizations for their support with arranging the field visit.

This MASG meeting was the fourth to be chaired by Italy...and the last. Italy's two year tenure as chair will come to end in December this year. In keeping with past practice, the vacancy for the position as chair was announced at the last MASG meeting, and following consultations, Ambassador Lambertini announced that the United States will take over as chair of the MASG for the next two years. In this context, he invited Mr Stan Brown, Director of the Office of Weapons Removal and

Abatement in the US State Department to say a few words. Mr Brown thanked Italy for their role as MASG Chair over the past two years and said that the MASG has stood the test of time. He stated that the United States was committed to mine action as much as ever, as evidenced by an increase in funding this year. The US was pleased to be taking over as Chair and highlighted that their decision to do so had been endorsed by the US Secretary of State. Mr Brown concluded by saying that he was looking forward to working together with the MASG members for the next two years.

Turning to today's meeting, the Chair reminded members that the minutes of the Geneva meeting of 9 February 2017 had been circulated to members and posted on the MASG website. The Chair also thanked the United States for their ongoing funding of the MASG secretariat position, which he said helps to maintain continuity and consistency within the MASG.

2. STATEMENT BY MR JEAN-PIERRE LACROIX, USG DEPARTMENT OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

The Chair introduced the keynote speaker for the meeting, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Ambassador Lambertini noted that USG Lacroix brought to the post 25 years of political and diplomatic experience, mostly handling multi-lateral organizations and United Nations activities and programmes. The Chair welcomed USG Lacroix to the MASG and invited him to address the meeting.

In his remarks, USG Lacroix recognized the 20-year anniversary of the APMBC and the creation of UNMAS. He expressed his gratitude for the continued commitment of the Governments of the MASG members to the mine action activities of the United Nations, commending in particular the effective chairmanship of the MASG by Italy and Ambassador Lambertini over the course of the past two years. USG Lacroix recognised the brave men and women working in mine action. He also congratulated the Director of UNMAS, Ms Agnès Marcaillou, and her team, for their recognition as an honouree at the UN Foundation Global Leadership Dinner, which is a testament to UNMAS's impact in the field.

The USG underscored the staggering scale of human suffering caused by explosive hazards, noting with particular concern the increase in the number of persons killed or injured by improvised explosive devices (IEDs). While the primary victims of explosive hazards remain civilians, aid workers and UN personnel are increasingly affected. Targeted attacks against UN personnel in Mali, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries, has become a disturbing reality in modern peacekeeping.

USG Lacroix stressed that mine action is needed now more than ever and emphasized the cross-pillar approach of mine action as an example of the Secretary-General's reform vision. In partnership with donor Governments and affected states, as well as with regional arrangements and civil society, the investment in robust mine action programmes has a lasting impact across the full spectrum of United Nations work – from humanitarian response to addressing challenges to international peace and security to enabling sustainable development and realizing the 2030 Agenda. USG Lacroix commended the work of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action (IACG-MA) in this regard.

USG Lacroix welcomed the Security Council's adoption of its first-ever resolution on mine action this past June as a critical milestone, which recognized the crucial role of mine action in the maintenance of international peace and security, and the imperative of a multilateral approach. He called on the Member States to champion the work of the United Nations in its implementation, as well as in the ongoing negotiations of the General Assembly resolution titled "Assistance in Mine Action".

USG Lacroix concluded by recognizing the collective commitment of diverse stakeholders to effective, multilateral action in the field of mine action and welcomed in particular the role of civil society in this regard.

Following the USG's remarks, the Chair noted that the Security Council had recently undertaken a mission to the Sahel where they had witnessed, first-hand, the tragedy and difficulties caused by mines and ERW on the civilian population. The Chair further added that the Secretary-General had committed himself to 'breaking down silos' within the United Nations and asked USG Lacroix how this is applicable to mine action. In response, the USG described mine action as one of the most "eloquent and successful examples" of a cross-pillar approach within the United Nations system. He highlighted the effective coordination of the IACG-MA in this regard and encouraged other sectors to look at mine action and its working methods as case in point for more coherent approaches.

3. COUNTRY AND THEMATIC UPDATES

3.1 Twenty Years of Mine Action. Ms Agnès Marcaillou was invited to reflect on the past 20 years of mine action. She noted that 20 years ago, because land mines were killing or maiming large numbers of people in war torn countries and were impacting the work of the United Nations, the General Assembly made the visionary decision to create UNMAS to ensure a strong and coherent UN response to mine action. She highlighted some of the successes achieved by the UN and its partners over the subsequent years, including reduced numbers of victims, increased amounts of land being released and the empowerment of mine-affected governments. The Director recognized that these achievements can be attributed to the work of all 14 United Nations agencies involved in mine action, particularly UNMAS, UNDP and UNICEF. Effective coordination is more important than ever to avoid duplication of efforts and to achieve tangible results – from advancing SDG realization to building government capacity to facilitating the return of IDPs and refugees.

Ms Marcaillou emphasized the United Nations commitment to accountability, transparency, cost effectiveness and measurable impact and thanked donors for their investment in robust M&E capacities for mine action in this regard. She stressed that United Nations entities would benefit from more predictable, multi-year and un-earmarked funding from donors as an enabler of greater coherence and cost savings. She added that frameworks like the APMBC generated early successes. However, recent developments such as the increased use of IEDs and the deliberate targeting of civilians and peacekeepers in places like Somalia and Mali have rendered the operating environments for mine action more complex and complicated, necessitating adaptability to evolving threats. In this context, the Director echoed USG Lacroix's reference to mine action as an example of an adapted, coherent UN system response in line with the SG's reform agenda.

Ms Marcaillou thanked Italy for promoting the awareness of mine action while Chair of the MASG and assured the US, in its capacity as incoming Chair, of the full support of UNMAS. She encouraged

members to continue to use the MASG as a forum to discuss the mine action issues of the day, bringing to bear the combined impact of both bilateral and multilateral action.

3.2 Iraq and Syria. Mr. Paul Heslop, UNMAS Chief of Programmes, gave a presentation on the situation in Iraq. Since 2015, UNMAS has been providing assistance with Explosive Hazard Management (EHM) response, risk education and government capacity building. Through a multi-faceted, “blended approach”, cutting across humanitarian, development, stabilization and recovery dimensions and drawing on non-governmental organisations and commercial companies, UNMAS coordinates survey, clearance and risk education in retaken areas, in direct support of humanitarian needs and the Government’s stabilization priorities. As an example of the complexity of the situation, Mr. Heslop showed an explosive device recovered from Iraq that was at the same time an anti-tank mine, an anti-personnel mine and an IED (because of an anti-lift or command detonation capability). The high numbers of devices like this that were being found changed the way the problem is thought about and tackled. Mr. Heslop reiterated that building local capacity within the police was a slow process. In the meantime, the focus was on prioritization of effort to ensure the greatest impact was achieved to benefit the most people. Examples were given of clearing the High Court in West Mosul and schools and hospitals in Mosul and Fallujah. The clearance work has provided access for the rehabilitation and restoration of critical infrastructure. It has also provided benefit to many Iraqis and served a critical purpose in the return to “normalcy” and creation of peace dividends. Mr. Heslop noted that UNMAS has developed a series of “Outcome Case Studies” that will be distributed to MASG Members via email.

The UNMAS work in Iraq is all undertaken with extra-budgetary funding. Currently, UNMAS has received only US\$35.6 million out of a required US\$250 million for 2017 and 2018. A copy of the presentation on Iraq is available on the MASG website.

In the second part of this agenda item, Ms. Marcaillou gave an update on UNMAS work in Syria. Two years ago, at the request of the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator, UNMAS established an office in Gaziantep (Turkey) to coordinate the work of mine action operators. The work of UNMAS includes risk education and some victim assistance, carried out under the humanitarian response umbrella of the United Nations ‘Whole-of Syria approach’. UNMAS is optimistic that it will be able to establish an office in Damascus, with the support of the Government of Syria, to further facilitate the ‘Whole-of Syria’ approach. UNMAS work will be carried out under the same conditions as other UN agencies, like UNHCR and UNICEF and according to recognized humanitarian principles.

In response to the presentations, the US delegate underscored Iraq as a success story and commended UNMAS-UNDP collaboration. He noted that the US is funding a private contractor to undertake work in Iraq in support of IDP return. In Syria, the main aim of the coalition was to defeat ISIS, and despite the security conditions, the US is currently funding three mine action organizations in Syria.

The UK representative asked about the challenges of capacity building in Iraq. Mr. Heslop spoke about the complexities of the IEDs left behind by ISIL and the specialised clearance skill sets and assets required to deal with the scope and scale of the problem in populated areas. Mr. Heslop noted that 148 local police officers had been killed last year in Fallujah alone, while trying to neutralise IEDs in residential areas, and he emphasised the intense training period needed to be able to safely deploy IED disposal operators. In the short term, UNMAS is focussed on providing first

responder training to local police officers, including incident site management, securing areas, reporting and providing explosive hazard risk awareness. This approach will assist the Government of Iraq to reduce the threat of explosive hazards to returning civilians while national capacities are being enhanced. UNMAS is working with the Government of Iraq to register highly skilled operators and bring them into Iraq, while at the same time building the capacity of local authorities who are involved in explosive hazard management. Member States were encouraged to emphasize that expediting registration and accreditation processes for international and national mine action operators to operate in Iraq will facilitate an effective response.

3.3 UNICEF Update. The Senior Adviser, Child Protection in Emergencies, Ms Tasha Gill gave a presentation on the work of UNICEF in mine action. She started by reminding the meeting that UNICEF's mandate in armed conflict stems from Security Council Resolution 1612, and that 60 % of casualties caused by ERW are children. UNICEF can engage before, during and after conflict. The work of UNICEF is guided by their 'Strategic Plan 2018 -2021', and while mine action is located under Goal 3 'Protection', UNICEF mine action activities contribute to all the strategic goals. UNICEF has multiple roles in mine action, including mine risk education, standards, child focussed victim assistance, RBM, advocacy, injury surveillance, etc. UNICEF currently provides technical support on MRE to 26 countries and victim assistance to 12 countries. In conclusion, Ms Gill noted that funding for MRE and VA was only a small percentage of mine action funding. A copy of the UNICEF presentation is available on the MASG website.

3.4 UNDP Update. The representative of UNDP, Mr Nik Sekhran, Director, Sustainable Development in BPPS, said that UNDP dealt with the development aspects of mine action. Work in 20 countries was undertaken under the 'Mine Action Support Framework 2016' and mine action facilitated access to justice, jobs and livelihoods. Mr Sekhran then went on to talk about mine action being an accelerator for the SDGs. He gave the example of Laos where the Lao government had recently declared an SDG 18 on UXO's, and where mine action played a crucial role in the SDG to 'leave no one behind'. He also said that mine action opened 'bottlenecks' and he gave some figures on the number of beneficiaries in Laos. Mr Sekhran then said that the UNDP support in Yemen was focussed on the Yemen Mine Action Centre (YEMAC) and that they helped mobilize survey and clearance assets. Another example of capacity building was Tajikistan, where a previous UNDP project had been transferred to national ownership and become the Government-led Tajikistan National Mine Action Programme.

Recently, UNDP had issued a joint publication with the GICHD called 'SDGs and Mine Action'. The SDGs do not specifically mention mine action, but the study demonstrated that mine action has links to SDG 16 in particular, but most other SDGs as well. UNDP will partner with the GICHD to operationalize action plans on this topic in Bosnia, Laos and Thailand, to demonstrate that mine action needs to be out there on the SDG agenda.

In question time, the representative of Germany asked for advice on how mine action can best be included in humanitarian appeals. Ms Marcaillou noted that UNHCR, as the lead of the Global Protection Cluster, had delegated responsibility for mine action to UNMAS. She agreed with Germany that mine action should not be an 'afterthought' but should be included at the start of any appeal process. Ms Marcaillou said that it was also important for the Security Council to consider mine action when drafting new resolutions. The representative of the UK asked how the SDGs can

be best used to support mine action. Mr Sekhran said that each country was different, but that mine action had to be addressed to achieve anything in affected countries. He felt it would be a huge missed opportunity if mine action is not pressed as an issue within the SDGs.

3.5 Operationalizing UNSC Resolution 1325 in Mine Action. Ms. Rebecca Jovin, the Chief of Strategic Planning and Operation Support at UNMAS, gave an update on the progress within mine action on operationalizing SC Resolution 1325 'Women, Peace and Security'. Ms. Jovin started by reminding the MASG representatives that Resolution 1325 acknowledged the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and girls and called for the adoption of a gender perspective, including with regard to demining and mine awareness programming. Ms. Jovin emphasized UNMAS's long-standing commitment to empowerment of women and girls, and to their protection, as evidenced among other actions by the Gender Guidelines developed in 2010 (to be updated in 2018) and the inclusion of gender indicators in the M&E mechanism. She provided some examples of UNMAS programmes where a wide range of gender aspects have been mainstreamed in mine action, including in Afghanistan, Libya and Iraq. Copies of the examples and the presentation can be accessed through the MASG website.

Germany asked whether there were flow on affects from mine action to make locals more employable in other fields. Mr. Heslop cited some examples of the benefits of mine action employment to families and communities in countries like Afghanistan and Somalia. Mr. Sekhran acknowledged that many jobs created during recovery periods were not sustainable in the longer term, but that the mine action dividend should be empowerment. He said that women should be included in all types of mine action projects. In this regard, Ms. Marcaillou highlighted the vast array of skills gained by women involved in mine action that extend beyond survey, clearance and/or risk education, and include skills development as physiotherapists or related functions.

4. PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN MINE ACTION

4.1 Update on UN Business Intelligence and Transparency

Mr. Chandru Ramanathan, Director of the UN's Enterprise Resource Planning (Umoja) project, briefed the Group on the current status of the project and the work plans for the next two years. His key messages were the following:

The system (Umoja) has over 42,400 users in 400 global locations, covering a very broad range of functionality, so much so that the software vendor, SAP, has characterized it as one of the most complex deployments among its user base. After the initial deployment challenges, the system has stabilized and operations are running smoothly.

Umoja has replaced hundreds of disparate systems with a single, global system that has brought real-time visibility to the UN's operations that is enabling much more informed decision-making. The breadth of its functionality has enabled a level of transparency, both internally and externally, that was not possible earlier. The Secretary-General is committed to leveraging the solution to improve both transparency and accountability, as laid out in his recent Management Reform proposals. The UN will also be accelerating its participation in the International Aid Transparency Initiative, and UNMAS has already indicated its eagerness to be among the early adopters.

Despite its rich functionality, Umoja has nearly a third of its processes yet to be deployed. Over the next two years, Umoja will extend its current capabilities in several new areas such as strategic planning, resource planning, performance management, fund raising, donor relations, implementing partner management, conference and event management, and supply chain management. The link between resource utilization and the accomplishment of results (as laid out in results frameworks) will be one of its key capabilities that will be of interest to the Group. The Implementing Partner management will also be key to the work of UNMAS.

Mr Ramanathan also briefly presented some of the ways visualization of information is made possible by Umoja and expressed the hope that such capability will in future be helpful to the Group in understanding how the UN is channelling donor resources in pursuit of its mandates.

4.2 Monitoring of Programmes and UN Mine Action Strategy. Mr. Takuto Kubo, Planning Officer and Ms. Maria Vardis, Political Affairs Officer at UNMAS, gave a joint presentation on 'Programmatic and UN system-wide Monitoring' as a central element of a transparent, accountable and results-based approach to mine action. The UNMAS approach is guided by the 'UN Mine Action Strategy 2013 – 2018', various HQ Strategic Priorities documents and field level strategies. Mr. Kubo then outlined the various reporting and review mechanisms that were in place, ranging from weekly feedback through to quarterly and annual reports, used by UNMAS to monitor programme delivery, inform decision-making and planning, and identify risks. Ms. Vardis noted that the current UN Mine Action Strategy had a built-in M&E mechanism that enables UNMAS to track progress made by the United Nations in mine action and to measure effectiveness and impact. Finally, Ms. Vardis spoke about the Portfolio of Mine Action Projects. The Portfolio is a sector-wide tool and a compilation of mine action strategic approaches and activities submitted by affected countries, UN agencies and operators. The Portfolio provides a snapshot of priority funding needs at any given moment and she encouraged donors to continue to make use of it. A copy of the presentation and some case studies are available on the MASG website.

5. GA RESOLUTION ON ASSISTANCE IN MINE ACTION

The Chair informed the meeting that Poland, on behalf of the European Union, was leading the negotiations on the biennial General Assembly resolution on mine action in the Fourth Committee. In this regard, he introduced Mr Pawel Radomski, the DPR at the Mission of Poland, to update the meeting on the negotiation process. Mr Radomski said that this year's resolution was critical, given that the Secretary-General's report noted that while the number of new victims of landmines was down, the number of victims of improvised explosive devices had increased. For the first time, the draft document called on member states to honour international agreements related to mine action. The draft also referred to the Security Council resolution on mine action, noted that mine action is a pre-requisite for peace and security, and highlighted the role of mine action in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

Mr Radomski informed that the draft mentions UNMAS, the MASG and United Nations partnerships with regional organizations and troop contributing countries. In an effort to clean up the use of varying terminology on explosive devices throughout the report, Member States were considering

adding a new preambular paragraph explaining that improvised explosive devices fall under the scope of mine action. Discussions were still underway on this topic.

Three meetings had already been held, and another was scheduled for 24 October. Mr Radomski indicated that negotiations would need to be completed in time for the Fourth Committee debate on 1 November, and expressed his appreciation for the inputs from colleagues and agencies.

6. UPDATES FROM MASG MEMBER STATES

6.1 Italy. Ambassador Lambertini gave a brief update on the work of Italy. He said that Italy remained deeply concerned about the humanitarian impact of ERW and accordingly had allocated EUR 47 million since 2001. The financial contribution for 2017 was EUR 3.3 million. Projects are currently being supported in Bosnia, Colombia, Sudan, Palestine, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq and Libya. This year they have provided EUR 500,000 to both UNMAS for Mosul and the ICRC for VA work in Afghanistan. Italy is currently considering new projects in Colombia, Somalia, Sudan and Bosnia and is open to consider new proposals in Africa and Asia.

6.2 Netherlands. The representative of the Netherlands said that their current budget for mine action was US\$16 million, of which EUR \$3 million had gone to the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action (UN VTF). A total of EUR 9 million had been allocated for Syria, Iraq and Yemen through their implementing partners – HALO, MAG and Danish Church Aid. The Netherlands appreciated the focus on gender issues as outlined by earlier speakers.

6.3 Japan. The representative of Japan stated that the total amount of Japan's assistance to Mine Action in the financial year 2016 (April 2016 - March 2017) amounted to US\$40.7 million for 37 projects in 22 countries and areas. The top recipients of mine action assistance in FY 2016 were Cambodia, Iraq, Afghanistan, DR Congo, and Lebanon. Of this amount, Japan contributed approximately US\$11.9 million through the UN VTF to Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Mali, DR Congo, and Palestine, and to the UNMAS headquarters coordination costs. Japan also provided more than US\$445,000 to UNICEF for Mine Risk Education in Ukraine, Yemen and Chad.

With regard to bi-lateral support, Japan has supported Cambodia, Iraq and Syria. Cambodia became the top recipient of mine action related funds from Japan in FY 2016, and received more than US\$16 million for Phase III of the "Programme for Integrated Mine Clearance and Landmine Victim Assistance". Over the past three years the Government of Japan has supported six projects in Iraq amounting to over US\$11.8 million, in the areas of capacity building, equipment purchase MRE and clearance. In Syria, Japan has provided more than US\$2.3 million for three mine action projects over the past five years.

6.4 United Kingdom. The representative of the UK said that the UK had allocated GBP 100 million for mine action over the next three years. In the first year, funds had been allocated to projects in Sri Lanka, Mozambique, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, South Sudan, Somalia, Myanmar (Burma) and Zimbabwe. DfID are currently deciding the priorities for the next two years and tenders will be called before the end of the year.

6.5 Australia. The Australian representative stated that Australia is strongly committed to supporting efforts towards a world free of landmines and other explosive remnants of war. Australia supports international agencies working globally across all areas of mine action, including in mine clearance, standards maintenance, risk education and victim assistance. This includes:

- UNMAS – US\$35 million since 2011;
- the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD);
- International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC);
- Handicap International;
- the Landmine and Cluster Munitions Monitor (ICBL-CMC); and,
- Geneva Call.

Australia also funds mine action through bilateral programs in affected countries, such as Afghanistan and Colombia, and has a major four-year, \$9 million commitment to Cambodia. Earlier this year Australia completed a three-year, \$3 million project to clear unexploded ordnance in Palau. Australia supports the relevant international treaties and is a member of the IEDD standards working group. Australia recently collaborated with partners to produce the booklet “Guidance on an Integrated Approach to Victim Assistance” and has funded the GICHD to develop standards for non-technical survey.

6.6 Germany. The German representative said that Germany had committed EUR 28 million this year. This had been allocated to 10 priority countries and covered clearance, MRE and VA.

6.7 Estonia. The representative of Estonia said that they were a small country, but that they have increased the amount committed for mine action over the years. The funding has gone to UNMAS and several bi-lateral organizations. The funding for Iraq and Syria (through the UN VTF) has doubled this year. The Estonian MFA is also funding the provision of personnel and a demining training system in Ukraine.

6.8 USA. The representative of the United States reminded the meeting that the US takes a broad approach to the whole issue of conventional weapons and their destruction. Currently the US provides assistance to 40 countries through 36 partner organizations. During FY 2017 the US expects to have contributed a total of US\$266.5 million to mine action, which included some additional allocations for the fight against ISIS in Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen. The planned budget for FY 2018 is US\$196 million. Full details of the US funded activities can be found in the annual publication ‘To Walk the Earth in Safety’.

7. UPDATES FROM MASG OBSERVERS

7.1 Centre for International Stabilization and Recovery (CISR)/James Madison University. The Director of CISR, Professor Ken Rutherford made a number of points of reflection. The first was that among the UN agencies, he recalled that UNICEF was the first to engage with mine action. He also noted that women had always been active in mine action, including women like the Nobel laureate Jody Williams. He said that the issue of IEDs was an important one, including ‘who owns the space’

when it comes to determining appropriate responses. Finally, he mentioned the 'Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction' which had been published continuously for the past 25 years.

7.2 International Trust Fund; Enhancing Human Security. The Acting Director of the ITF, Ms Sabina Beber-Bostjancic, started by saying that although she was not representing Slovenia per se, the contribution to mine action made by Slovenia each year was increasing on a modest basis. She noted that the ITF will be celebrating its 20th anniversary next year. The ITF supported the call for global partnerships to tackle mine action, and they also supported the APMBC deadline of 2025. She noted the success of the ITF in forging local partnerships and how important they were.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 The representative of Switzerland said that he had been asked to raise a point in the context of Switzerland's role as Chair of the APMBC Article 5 committee. The Article 5 committee was concerned that Ukraine had yet to submit an extension request for its clearance deadline, and Switzerland requested MASG members to raise this matter in any dealings that they may have with Ukraine.

8.2 The Chair raised the question of the next meeting of the MASG. He said that usually the MASG would be held in the margins of the National Mine Action Directors and UN Advisers meeting, that was scheduled for the week 13 to 16 February in 2018. However, it would be up to the new Chair to decide. Mr Brown, the incoming Chair, confirmed that it was the intention of the USA to hold the meeting in Geneva during that week.

9. CLOSING REMARKS

In closing the meeting, Ambassador Lambertini said that it had been an honour to serve as the chair the MASG, and that he was pleased to have been part of such a committed group. He said that the trip to Lebanon had been a chance for him to see first-hand that mine action was making a difference. Ambassador Lambertini thanked the partner organizations, such as UNMAS for their support, and also Mr Ian Mansfield for his work as the MASG Secretariat.

10. MEETING CLOSE

The Chair closed the meeting at 13.15 hours.

As at 29 November 2017