



Remarks by

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on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

MASG

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It is a great pleasure for me to join you today and to speak to you on behalf of the members of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action – the IACG-MA.

Since our last meeting, the mine action sector has continued to evolve and make considerable strides.

The UN Strategy on Mine Action 2013-2018 is operational and its daily implementation means that the United Nations works in full cooperation with all the stakeholders of the mine action sector: affected states, civil society, private sector, international and regional organizations, donors. In its latest General Assembly resolution on assistance in mine action adopted, Member States recognized the new UN Strategy on Mine Action as well as the inherent efforts to implement it, including the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation approach to measure progress against the four strategic objectives as well as the overall vision of the UN Strategy.

Thanks to strong partnerships, great work has been done to reduce the threat and impact of mines and explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions, on peace and security, humanitarian relief, human rights, and socio-economic development.

But significant challenges and risks remain. Mines and other conventional explosive weapons still have devastating effects worldwide. It is urgent and crucial to tackle these threats via effective responses that meet the needs of people.

Such responses require cost effective programming and results-based evidence. This week presented an opportunity to focus on measurability as a key aspect of mine action work and a main pillar of the UN Strategy on Mine Action 2013-2018.

The United Nations is adamant that mine action is inherently linked with larger humanitarian, peace, security and development plans to promote agricultural production, strengthen infrastructure, improve access to water supply and provide better education and health services.

In **CAR**, UNMAS is coordinating all mine action related activities, including risk education implemented by partners in IDP camps, and providing ammunition and weapons management technical support to MISCA including clearance of all ex-FACA/ex-Séléka explosive storage facilities in barracks and camps in Bangui, an important prerequisite for all humanitarian actors on the ground to operate safely.

In **Mali**, UNMAS and UNICEF, partnering with Danish Church Aid, Handicap International, Mines Advisory Group, the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action, and other local and international NGOs, provided risk education to over 100,000 people, and destroyed over 1,000 items of UXO. UNMAS providing IED risk awareness training to humanitarian, development and early recovery community is a further contribution to operations in Mali.

In **South Sudan**, following recent fighting, UNICEF MRE activities target mainly displaced people in IDP camps. At the moment, UNICEF has trained eight local organizations and is deploying them in order to provide timely MRE. UNMAS has deployed eight multi-tasking teams to conduct clearance operations and surveys, to provide quick response and to liaise with local communities.

In **Somalia**, UNMAS continues to provide support to AMISOM and the Federal Government of Somalia in the area of explosive management under the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia. UNMAS conducts humanitarian mine action coordination and activities. UNICEF targets areas affected by the current Government and AMISOM military offensive in South Central Somalia and areas hosting displaced communities and IDPs. UNICEF plans to expand its activities to include more capacity development work with the authorities while strengthening its networks to deliver MRE in areas that are difficult to access. Furthermore, at the request of UNHCR, UNMAS will be supporting a pilot project related to repatriation.

In **Syria**, explosive remnants of war continue to be a significant threat to civilians. UNMAS manages the 'clash database', collating and mapping data on heavy weapons use across Syria. This information provided by UNMAS supports DSS and OCHA in planning humanitarian assistance and information products. Within Syria, UNICEF has succeeded in integrating MRE into the school curriculum and into other protection activities.

Additional details on these activities, including 2014 funding requirements, can be found in the handouts we have circulated.

Our cooperation and coordination is tantamount to our strategic and practical success. I thank my UN partners in the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action for their continued dedication and cooperation.

I look forward to being in close contact with each of you in 2014 and hearing more about how you think the mine action sector can be more innovative and more effective.

Thank you for your support.