



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

**Sixteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
(18 December - 21 December)**

General Exchange of Views

Mr. President,¹

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, comprising the United Nations entities involved in mine action.²

Twenty years ago, a determined civil society turned a dream into reality; the adoption of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention; we salute the ICBL for its dedication. The drafters of the Convention established a powerful link with the United Nations. They entrusted its Secretary-General to serve as its depository, a function which not all multilateral instruments have provided for. 2017 also marks twenty years of steadfast United Nations support to the Convention.

The same year the United Nations General Assembly established the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), mandated to coordinate, through the Inter-Agency Coordination group for mine action (IACG-MA), the efforts of the United Nations to achieve our shared goal of a mine free world. Two decades later, the United Nations is operating in an increasing number of affected countries with positive results, recognised by the General Assembly³. I would like to highlight the three main ways the United Nations has added value to the implementation of the Convention.

¹ H.E. Thomas Hajnoczi, Ambassador of Austria to the United Nations

² The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) / United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) (Chair), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Development Programme (UNDP), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) (Observer), and the World Bank (Observer).

³ A/RES/72/75



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Firstly, coherence. The IACG ensures a coherent UN approach to supporting affected states in meeting their obligations under the treaty, in particular through the development of the United Nations Strategy on Mine Action. Our action in implementing the UN strategy is measured and evaluated with a view to serving affected communities with greater impact and efficiency.

Under the leadership of UNMAS, in collaboration with multiple stakeholders including, critically, impacted countries, International Mine Action Standards, have been used by affected States to develop their own national standards. Without doubt standards have professionalised the sector and saved countless lives; they will continue to do so.

Secondly, partnerships. Even before 1997, the United Nations was engaged in mine clearance and mine risk education in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, and Mozambique. Since then we have established mine action programmes in 40 plus complex emergencies and post-conflict contexts. The United Nations, together with affected states, has succeeded in establishing strong national mine action capabilities across continents. As local programmes mature, South-South collaborations increase; for example, between Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Partnerships with regional bodies have also proven their value. The United Nations supported the African Union in its initiative to enhance assistance and coordination through development of its Framework on mine action and explosive remnants of war. The United Nations and the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe continue to support regional ties, for example between Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Turkey.

The contribution of our implementing partners to our success cannot be overstated. We take this opportunity to thank civil society for their efforts.

Thirdly, integration, or mainstreaming, of mine action into humanitarian response plans and broader recovery and development frameworks. In 2005, the Inter-Agency



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Standing Committee established the cluster system to strengthen the response to humanitarian emergencies. UNMAS was designated Mine Action Area of Responsibility lead and provider of last resort, to ensure a more predictable, accountable and effective mine action responses in emergencies. Work carried out by UNDP identifies the catalytic role of mine action in the achievement of many of the SDGs and provides a framework for the IACG to support the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, central to UNICEF's work, includes a commitment to prevent the use of landmines and to address their impact.

Mr. President, Excellences, and colleagues,

Still, challenges remain in realizing our vision of a mine free world.

The United Nations is deeply concerned that our collective success might be overshadowed by complex and protracted crises worldwide. Some states not party to the Convention and non-state actors continue to use anti-personnel mines. They are a few, yet, today, the rate of contamination surpasses the speed by which land is being cleared. Urbanization of warfare, new types of contamination, including victim-operated improvised explosive devices, have led to a marked rise in casualties, particularly and tragically, amongst children.

There is an urgent need to **universalize the Convention and reinforce the stigma against the use of anti-personnel mines**. The United Nations calls on States not party to acknowledge the threat caused by mines as well as their social, economic and environmental cost, and accede to the Convention.

Paradoxically, while contamination and civilian casualties are escalating, the financial support to the Convention has declined. The United Nations calls on States Parties in-a-



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position to do so, to provide the resources necessary to enable affected states to effectively plan and address their priorities. The continued shift from predictable, sustainable, flexible and multi-year funding towards earmarked contributions diminishes the ability of the United Nations system and its partners to respond systematically and effectively.

Mr. President,

Collectively, we have accomplished a great deal. Be reassured of the United Nations commitment to continue support the implementation of the Convention. Together, let us strive towards a mine free world by 2025.

Thank you.