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**United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action**  
**20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the States Parties**  
**(21 - 25 November 2022)**

**[Statement under agenda item 10a – Victim Assistance]**

Mr. President,<sup>1</sup>

This statement is delivered on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA).<sup>2</sup>

Data reported to the United Nations Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism<sup>3</sup> which collects information from some 30 countries with a United Nations mine action presence, indicates that in 2021 mines, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and explosive remnants of war killed more than 4,000 people and injured close to 8,000 people. Together, Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan accounted for two thirds of casualties registered. Adding Somalia, they account for 80% of all casualties registered.

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<sup>1</sup> H.E. Ambassador Alvaro Enrique Ayala Melendez, Chargé d'Affaires, Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations in Geneva, President of the Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties (20MSP).

<sup>2</sup> The United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action consists of twelve United Nations Departments and Offices of the Secretariat, specialized agencies, funds and programmes: 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, 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.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mineaction.org/en/resources/un-mine-action-strategy-and-monitoring-and-evaluation-mechanism>



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Excellencies,

The normative regime for victim assistance is robust: the Mine Ban Convention requires that each State Party in a position to do so provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of mine victims. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provides a comprehensive framework to address the needs and advance the rights of all persons with disabilities. The UN General Assembly urges all Member States to support mine-affected States by providing reliable, timely and, where possible, multi-annual contributions for mine action activities, including those relating to rapid response in humanitarian emergencies, **victim assistance** and mine risk education. In October 2021, the UN endorsed an International Mine Action Standard on Victim Assistance in Mine Action.

The United Nations aims to leverage its coordination role to advance respect for the rights of persons directly affected by explosive ordnance by supporting access to specialized assistance and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in armed conflict. More specifically, the United Nations seeks to ensure that the voices of persons directly affected by explosive ordnance are heard in larger peacemaking and peacebuilding processes.

Access to specialized assistance is particularly challenging for civilians in armed conflicts due to the lack of security, transport, services, and information. It is essential to coordinate with local and national organizations, women's organizations, organization of persons with disabilities to map existing services and refer victims. In 2022, the partners working together in the Mine Action Area of



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Responsibility coordinated by UNMAS and the Danish Refugee Council proposed 40 victim assistance projects as part of the humanitarian response in 18 emergencies. Half received funded. Half did not.

Mr. President,

With the funding received, we have made progress. In Northern Nigeria for example, UNMAS developed an approach for victims of explosive ordnance, integrating identification and victim data collection, mapping of specialized and non-specialized services, and establishment of referral pathways in close coordination with protection, health and livelihoods actors. Organizations of persons with disabilities are closely associated with the project. Training of local organizations have allowed some access in hard-to-reach areas, while there is enhanced coordination with partners such as ECHO and the ICRC on emergency rehabilitation and psychosocial support needs and access to assistive devices.

In 2020, UNMAS established a Victim Assistance Working Group in Damascus to coordinate mine action actors with actors working in protection, health, livelihoods, and education and improve access to services and social protection for survivors and indirect victims. The Group identified over 250 services in 13 governorates of the Syrian Arab Republic and developed a service mapping dashboard providing information on service providers, their contact information, and the types of services provided. Today, it constitutes the main source of information on disability inclusive services for the Protection Cluster.



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Partnerships are central to effective victim assistance programming. UNMAS is grateful to Belgium, Denmark, European Union, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and Switzerland and all partners who fund victim assistance or contribute unearmarked funding to the Mine Action Voluntary Trust Fund enabling UNMAS to invest in victim assistance.

I would like to thank the Committee on Victim Assistance (Algeria, Ecuador, Italy and Uganda) for convening a Victim Assistance Expert Meeting this week. UNMAS looks forward to exchanging best practices in implementation of victim assistance in humanitarian response.

Thank you.

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