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United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
**Fifth Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,
Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction**

Siem-Reap, Cambodia

Statement under agenda item 8 (c) Clearing mined areas

[delivered by Mr. Steinar Essen on Tuesday, 26 November]

Mr. President¹,

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

Excellencies,

The United Nations actively engages in mine clearance and risk education to enable humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding activities in 30 countries or territories. The number of people living under the threat of contamination has risen considerably over the past five years due to the eruption of violent armed conflicts. New contamination has been added to legacy contamination in Ethiopia, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nigeria, Palestine, Sudan, and Ukraine.

Within active armed conflict contexts, risk education is a cost-effective way to help vulnerable communities manage the risk. The Oslo Action Plan, with its distinct chapter on “mine risk education and reduction” and the EORE Advisory Group - a coalition of 17 organizations - has guided the mine action sector and created an impulse for all professionals to

¹ Dr. Ly Thuch, Senior Minister and First Vice President of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), President of the Fifth Review Conference “The Siem Reap-Angkor Summit on a Mine-Free World”.

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, 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.



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tailor their risk education programmes to the context, culture, type of contamination, and target audience. Age, gender, disability, and diversity considerations have helped to sharpen our methodologies. In Siem Reap today, let us celebrate the progress we have made in the past five years and the lives protected through this method of prevention.

To sustain the momentum, we invite State Parties to report comprehensively on risk education under Article 7 of the Convention, to systematically include detailed, costed, and multi-year risk education plans in their extension requests, and to consider appointing a dedicated State Party as risk education coordinator or champion within the Convention.

Excellencies,

Now turning to the issue of clearance. Time is of the essence when the conditions are in place for clearance operations, including supportive national authorities, safe access for deminers, and the presence of accredited organizations with the expertise and equipment to manage the clearance process in line with applicable standards. This is the case in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Syria and Ukraine where the United Nations is playing a critical role in ensuring a coordinated approach in support of relevant national authorities.

Afghanistan has a detailed plan to complete the clearance of mines, yet the Mine Action Technical Centre and the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan are facing a critical funding shortage. Most national demining organizations are on the verge of closure and significant numbers of experienced personnel face unemployment. Should sustainable funding become available, the Programme has the trained personnel to clear the contamination.

In Ethiopia, mines and other explosive ordnance are endangering communities and hindering the return of displaced populations and slowing humanitarian assistance. The United Nations is building national capacities to manage the sector and coordinating the Mine Action Area of Responsibility to put in place comprehensive information management, national safety



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standards, prioritization of tasks in support of humanitarian objectives and economic recovery. Coordination of risk education and their incorporation in peacebuilding efforts helps operators to reach communities. Mine action operators have received accreditation from the Government and are ready to do clearance.

In the Syrian Arab Republic, after 13 years of war, the contamination is massive and high number of casualties are recorded year after year. Clearance operations have started and must be scaled up to support early recovery.

Ukraine has underlined the critical importance of clearance for global food security. Food security and mine action actors work together to release productive land. For example, they share their analysis on soil fertility and contamination to optimize the prioritization of clearance assets and enhance crop yield. Beyond agricultural recovery, it is critically important to undertake demining in a way that does not further damage the environment. In this context, I am proud that we have released a standard on environmental management and climate change in July 2024, defining the minimum requirements for environmental management in mine action operations.

Lastly, I would like to say a few words on IEDs. In the past 10 years we have seen a sharp rise in incidents involving IEDs including improvised landmines. This phenomenon has reached every corner of the globe³. Mitigating this threat is complex and requires State Parties to intensify their cooperation as proposed in the Siem Reap Action Plan. Together with the Small Arms Survey, we would like to invite you to a side event on a “Whole of society approach to addressing the threats of improvised mines and delivering emergency care in fragile settings”.

Thank you.

³ [S-G report on countering the threat posed by IEDs](#), A/79/211, 2024. Between 2020 and 2023, 65 countries and territories were affected by IEDs leading to significant civilian casualties in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Mali, Myanmar, the Niger, Nigeria, the Philippines, Somalia, and Syria. In 2023 alone, over 3,200 casualties were recorded, with civilians constituting 68% of the victims.



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