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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 (d) Assisting the victims

[delivered by Mr. Hugues Laurence on Wednesday, 27 November]

Mr. President¹,

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

Since the last Review Conference in 2019, thousands of people have been injured or killed in incidents involving mines and other explosive ordnance. Year after year, innocent civilians, are disproportionately affected.

In 2022, 85% of all casualties from mines and exploded remnants of war worldwide were civilians. In rural Northern Ethiopia in 2023, 80% of victims of unexploded ordnance assisted by the ICRC were children, injured when playing or collecting firewood. People who have been forced to flee their homes continue to be particularly at risk. Landmines threaten the lives, physical integrity and mobility of civilians, especially in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen.

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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Injuries include shattered limbs requiring amputation, loss of sight, head injuries, and severe burns, which inevitably lead to multiple operations and prolonged rehabilitation, severely impacting victim's mental health, social wellbeing, and livelihood.

The United Nations mine action partners seek to coordinate with and support national authorities to provide immediate and long-term assistance.

For example, immediate and coordinated post blast civilian casualty care is critical to reducing the risk of death and long-term disability. Due to the complexity of injuries, survivors require rapid first aid close to the point of injury and means of immediate evacuation to trauma centres and surgical experts.

Often incidents occur in remote areas or where trauma care systems have been weakened by longstanding conflict and significant resource limitations. For example, health care and rehabilitation services are on the brink of collapse in Afghanistan, Sudan and Yemen. According to WHO³, 1,095 attacks on health care systems were reported in 2024 thus far, many of which with heavy weapons. The UN is co-hosting a side event with Small Arms Survey on Friday to look at the threats of improvised mines and delivering emergency care to victims in fragile settings.

Excellencies,

Coordination is essential for victim assistance. In humanitarian emergencies, the Mine Action Area of Responsibility works with the International Rescue Committee and the Norwegian Refugee Council to increase access to protection services that are holistic and

³ <https://extranet.who.int/sssa/LeftMenu/Index.aspx>



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multisectoral. We need continued improvements in victim identification, referrals and case management, and meaningful implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Assistance needs to be tailored to the demographics of victims and supported by robust data collection and reporting methods, in line with the minimum data requirements of the International Mine Action Standard on information management. Capacity to collect age, gender, disability and diversity data must be enhanced within organisations.

Many explosive ordnance survivors sustain lifelong disabilities. Between 2019 and 2023, in countries with UN mine action programmes we observed an increase in the number of countries that have a national disability policy. It is imperative that we continue this trend to ensure that survivors can succeed in today's world. Employing mine victims is a proactive way to ensure their voices are heard and should be encouraged by the leaders of mine action organisations and State Parties.

Excellencies,

We urgently call for additional funding for victim assistance. The rights of explosive ordnance survivors and affected communities depend on it.

Thank you.

END