



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

Sixteenth Conference of High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II on mines, booby-traps and other devices to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Meeting of High Contracting Parties: Statement under Other issues relevant to the Convention, including mines other than anti-personnel mines (MOTAPM)

Friday, 14 November 2014

Delivered by Ms. Agnès Marcaillou, Director, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

Mr. Chairperson,

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action¹ (IACG-MA), comprising 14 United Nations entities involved in mine action.

Mines other than anti-personnel mines (MOTAPM), especially anti-vehicle mines (AVMs) constitute a long-standing humanitarian concern. In addition to the challenges caused by Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), there is the problem of anti-vehicle mines, which the United Nations in the field has to deal with on a regular basis. These weapons represent a grave threat to civilians, humanitarian aid workers and peacekeepers (i.e. representatives of several countries in this room that are Troop Contributing Countries and Police Contributing Countries). AVMs can indeed significantly hamper the delivery of humanitarian aid to vulnerable populations, impede the return of refugees and internally displaced people, hinder recovery and development of affected communities, and undermine the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping operations and the safety of its personnel.

In his message to this Conference yesterday, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who has also been entrusted by States to serve as the depositary of the CCW, has urged High Contracting Parties to “further explore ways to ensure that anti-vehicle mines no longer harm civilians, impede the delivery of humanitarian aid or obstruct social and economic development.”

¹ The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) / United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), UN Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) (Observer status), and the World Bank (Observer status).

The CCW remains the appropriate multilateral framework to address issues of international humanitarian law in relation to conventional weapons. The Secretary-General of the United Nations stated that it is important that the issue of MOTAPM remains on the agenda of the CCW. The IACG-MA will therefore continue to support discussions on this agenda item, in its own merit and separately from matters under consideration in relation to Improvised Explosives Devices.

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

The IACG-MA would like to recall some key messages that the United Nations has conveyed to you, High Contracting Parties:

First: that existing international regulations are inadequate to address the actual humanitarian and socio-economic impact associated with the use of anti-vehicle mines.

Second: that, without prejudice to the outcome of the ongoing discussions, there is a need for new rules or new instruments on anti-vehicle mines;

Third: that new rules or a new instrument should reflect elements to significantly reduce their impact, such as:

- a) All anti-vehicle mines should contain a self-destruction mechanism, or at least mechanisms for self-neutralization or self-deactivation so that they have a limited lifespan;
- b) Anti-vehicle mines should be detectable by commonly available technical mine detection equipment;
- c) Anti-vehicle mines should not be fitted with anti-handling devices; and,
- d) Anti-vehicle mines should not be fitted with sensitive fuses that can be activated by the presence, proximity or contact of a person.

Lastly, the United Nations continues to strongly urge all Parties to comply strictly and fully with international humanitarian law.

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

It is truly regrettable that - despite the concrete evidence provided by the United Nations, by the ICRC, and earlier by the SIPRI and GICHD study on the humanitarian and developmental impact of AVMs - the CCW has not yet been able to agree on and adopt new rules on anti-vehicle mines.

The case has now been made with data and evidence that, in some countries, which have spoken today, AVMs have a greater adverse humanitarian impact than anti-personnel mines. Hence, the United Nations encourages High Contracting Parties to re-double the effort towards the development of new rules for mines other than anti-personnel mines.

The United Nations welcomes the general support for further discussions on this crucial humanitarian issue with a view to resolving differences. It is important, therefore, that MOTAPM be included in the agenda of next year's work of the CCW.

The United Nations will remain engaged in supporting your work, Mr. Chairperson, and that of the High Contracting Parties. In particular, UNMAS will continue to remain available to facilitate discussions amongst experts. As discussions in this framework continue, so do the dramatic consequences of anti-vehicle mines, and a global response becomes more urgent every day.

Thank you.