



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
Fifth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on
Certain Conventional Weapons

(12 - 16 December 2016)

General Exchange of Views

Geneva, 12 December 2016

Madam President¹,

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA), comprising the United Nations entities² involved in mine action.

The international community is witnessing an unprecedented level of flagrant disregard of international humanitarian law and the use of weapons prohibited under Conventions such as the one on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The humanitarian implications of this are far-reaching.

Over the past five years, conflicts, old and new, have caused unimaginable suffering and generated mass displacement. On 5 December, exactly a week ago, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, here in Geneva, launched the largest Global Humanitarian appeal on record – USD 22.2 billion.

Today's complex conflict environments and new developments in weapons technology require renewed commitment and action.

Since its adoption in 1980, the CCW has been an important instrument through which High Contracting Parties have acknowledged the responsibility to protect civilians and field personnel from the indiscriminate harm caused by conventional weapons. The Fifth Review Conference is an opportune moment to discuss how to meet today's challenges.

¹ Ambassador Tehmina Janjua of Pakistan.

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).



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Excellencies,

The United Nations welcomes the agenda of the Review Conference.

The United Nations reiterates support to ongoing efforts to advance practical measures to implement Protocol V on explosive remnants of war. In this regard, we welcome the decision to hold a workshop next year on Article 4 relating to the recording, retaining and transmission of information on used and abandoned explosive ordnance.

The United Nations recognizes that the issue of IEDs is a complex and multifaceted one, requiring action at multiple levels. The CCW and its Amended Protocol II play a key role in examining the impact of these deadly devices. In our view, Amended Protocol II should continue to provide a forum for the exchange of valuable knowledge and information among states and other actors. We support the points raised in the *Draft Declaration on IEDs*, in particular on continuing information exchange within the framework of the Convention on measures and best practices.

With respect to practical measures, the United Nations is undertaking a consultation process for the elaboration of standards on IED disposal. The process, coordinated by UNMAS, will involve technical experts from Member States to develop standards that establish the minimum requirements and capability for IED disposal.

The implementation of awareness and risk education campaigns for communities affected by IEDs remains a priority for the United Nations. In Syria, Myanmar, Ukraine, and the Lake Chad Basin, UNICEF supports national authorities and partners to develop and integrate IED risk education messages into their campaigns.

The United Nations is concerned that current provisions of the CCW and its Protocols do not sufficiently address the issue of mines other than anti-personnel mines (MOTAPM)³. MOTAPM continue to cause death and injury; in some countries at a rate greater than anti-personnel mines. For example in South Sudan, between 2014 and 2016, 86% of recorded mine casualties were caused by anti-vehicle mines. In Afghanistan, from 2015 to March 2016, there were more than 4,000 recorded mine and ERW hazards,

³ In the statement, the weapon system addressed is referred to both as MOTAPM and anti-vehicle mines (AVMs).



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covering 1,500 communities in an area of over 590 square kilometres. Of these recorded hazards, a staggering 48 % were anti-vehicle mines.

Existing rules of international humanitarian law provide only minimal restrictions on the use of MOTAPM. The United Nations would like to encourage High Contracting Parties to take measured actions regarding anti-vehicle mines so as to limit their humanitarian and socio-economic impact. Reducing the lifespan of anti-vehicle mines and agreeing on standards for their detectability would be a significant step forward.

Madam President,

Compliance forms the foundation of trust in every instrument of International Humanitarian Law. We encourage High Contracting Parties to uphold their reporting obligation, pursuant to paragraph 5 of the *Decision on Compliance*, as a means to strengthen respect for the Convention and its Protocols.

Earlier this year, we welcomed Bahrain and Côte d'Ivoire, joining as the 122nd and 123rd High Contracting Parties. For the Convention to achieve universalization, this positive trend must continue. We commend Afghanistan in their efforts to accede to the Convention.

Thank you