



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA)

Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Geneva, 14 – 15 November 2013

Delivered by UNMAS on behalf of the IACG-MA

Mr. Chairperson,

I deliver the following statement on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action (IACG-MA), comprising the 12 United Nations departments, agencies, funds, and programmes involved in mine action.

The United Nations wishes to congratulate you on your appointment as Chairperson of this year's Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We are convinced that under your able leadership the CCW will continue to advance mine action, IHL, and also broader disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

The CCW is highly relevant to the United Nations mine action community. Two of its protocols, Amended Protocol II on mines, booby-traps and other devices and Protocol V on explosive remnants of war, represent major international legal instruments at the root of our work.

As the Secretary-General noted in his recent report on assistance in mine action, armed conflicts in Libya, Mali and the Syrian Arab Republic have exposed civilians to threats from landmines, explosive remnants of war, cluster munitions, improvised explosive devices and increased use of explosive weapons in population areas. The full extent of these threats must be addressed.

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates, we would now like to draw your attention to three issues to which we attach great importance.

First, the issue of mines-other-than antipersonnel mines (MOTAPM) remains a major humanitarian concern. MOTAPM not only kill or injure civilian populations, they also block access to vulnerable populations by humanitarian workers, impede the return of refugees and IDPs, and hamper the socio-economic development of affected communities. The United Nations believes that existing legal frameworks governing the MOTAPM are not strong enough, and that international humanitarian law needs to be strengthened in this regard. For almost a decade now, we have advocated for the tightening of rules regulating MOTAPM, and we continue urging High Contracting Parties to pursue efforts in this respect.

Second, we are concerned about the implications for the protection of civilians of new weapon technologies, specifically lethal autonomous weapons systems. We would welcome further discussion of such implications and recognize that the CCW provides an important forum to that end.

Third, we join the Secretary-General in stressing the need to strengthen the protection of civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Whilst different technical features dictate their precision and the scale of their explosive effect, these weapons generally create a zone of blast and fragmentation within which further discrimination is not possible. This makes their use in populated areas highly problematic. Also, the use of explosive weapons inevitably results in explosive remnants of war, which remain a threat until they are finally removed. We would encourage Member States to engage with UN actors and civil society in further discussions on this important issue.

The United Nations also encourages High Contracting Parties to submit compliance reports on a regular basis, to continue their support to the CCW's Implementation Support Unit, and to keep contributing to the CCW Sponsorship Programme, which has proved to be a very useful tool in support of your accelerated Plan of Action on universalization.

Finally, Mr. Chairperson, the United Nations continues to encourage non-state parties to join the CCW, and the High Contracting Parties to support them in this important endeavour.

Thank you.