



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

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

Geneva, 13 November 2013

Statement under General Exchange of Views

Delivered by UNMAS on behalf of the IACG-MA

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action (IACG-MA), I wish to congratulate you on your election as President of the Fifteenth Annual Conference of High Contracting Parties to amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons on mines, booby-traps and other devices. The IACG-MA – composed of 12 United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes involved in mine action – is convinced that this forum will greatly benefit from your leadership, and supports you fully in your presidency.

Landmines, booby-traps and other devices continue to inflict unspeakable harm on civilians during and long after armed conflict.

Amended Protocol II is the single international legal framework addressing anti-vehicle mines, booby-traps and other devices in a legally binding way.

The United Nations acknowledges the work done by the Group of Experts last April and, particularly, the reinvigorated discussion on Improvised Explosive Devices and on the operation and the status of the Protocol.

Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) continue to cause increasing alarm across the globe. As pointed out by the Secretary-General in his Report on Assistance in Mine Action, the threat and use of improvised explosive devices affects many places, such as Afghanistan, Kenya, Libya, Mali and Somalia, and the Golan Heights, to mention just a few. In Mali for instance, there have been 53 confirmed casualties from such attack since March 2012.

The use of IEDs and their associated impact were also highlighted in numerous other recent reports of the Secretary-General, including on the situations in Afghanistan, in Mali and in Somalia, on the measures to eliminate international terrorism, and on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force.

IEDs also pose risks to United Nations personnel in these countries, but most importantly, they impact indiscriminately civilian populations, who constitute the majority of victims.

In 2012, there were nearly 21,000 casualties from IEDs – an increase from 2011 – and civilians accounted for 81% of IED casualties, according to the NGO Action on Armed Violence (AOAV).

The annual conference of High Contracting Parties to CCW Amended Protocol II is one of the main international fora currently addressing IEDs. The United Nations welcomes the compilation of existing guidelines, best practice and recommendations aimed at addressing the illicit use of materials for such devices, and encourages all relevant parties, and in particular member states, to continue enriching it.

Throughout the last year, the United Nations has strived to protect civilian populations by building national capacities across several continents. During April's meeting of the Group of Experts, UNMAS and UNICEF detailed efforts to promote compliance with international humanitarian law with respect to IEDs.

UNMAS noted its support to national authorities to facilitate IED removal and destruction, IED awareness training, IED disposal training, and post-blast analysis training. UNICEF highlighted its protection efforts through advocacy, mine and ERW risk education, and the establishment of surveillance systems.

Furthermore, in Somalia, for instance, UNICEF and UNMAS trained AMISOM and Somali security personnel on how to systematically respond to explosive threats, including over 1000 IEDs. In Yemen, UNDP, UNMAS and UNICEF supported national authorities in their response to the increasingly sophisticated IED threats.

Mr. President,

For a decade, the United Nations has advocated for stronger international regulation of mines other than antipersonnel mines, MOTAPM. We believe that existing legislation does not sufficiently address the terrible humanitarian concerns posed by MOTAPM. Therefore, we urge the States Parties to continue negotiating a comprehensive mandate on MOTAPM in the framework of the CCW Convention.

Finally, the United Nations would like to reiterate that regular and accurate national reporting is essential to the implementation of AP II, and to the progress towards compilation with international humanitarian law. We also welcome the accessions since the Fourteenth Conference of Kuwait, and Zambia, and encourage all states who have not yet done so to accede to amended Protocol II.

Thank you.