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United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
**23rd Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II on mines,
booby-traps and other devices**
(10 December 2021)

[Statement under agenda item 7 – General exchange of views]

Delivered by Mr. Bruno Donat, Chief, Geneva Office, UNMAS

Mr. President¹,

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA)². As this is the first time I am taking the floor, I would like to congratulate you for your important work and for your election as President of the 23rd Annual Conference of High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Just two days ago, on 8 December, a convoy of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was attacked, causing the tragic death of seven fellow Togolese United Nations peacekeepers. Preliminary reports point to the use of an IED which also seriously injured another three colleagues. The United Nations condemns this attack in the strongest possible terms. Since the beginning of 2021, dozens of attacks on MINUSMA personnel involving IED have been recorded, killing several Peacekeepers.

¹ H.E. Ichiro Ogasawara, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament, President-designate of the 23rd Annual Conference of Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

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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Mr. President,

IED kill and injure more individuals than any other explosive weapon.³ In Burkina Faso, for example, IED caused 100% of the explosive ordnance casualties in 2021.⁴ In the past decade, IED caused injury and death in more than 100 countries and territories.⁵ In Colombia, numerous armed groups continue to use mines, mostly IED. Since the beginning of 2021, accidents have been reported in 37 municipalities. According to the National Mine Action Centre within the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP), 114 persons, including 22 children, have been killed or maimed this year.

Excellencies,

These series of events reinforce the determination of the United Nations to continue to strive for coordinating effective and enhanced preventive measures to reduce the threat posed by IED, including by fostering technological cooperation and assistance.

This year, the recently established UNMAS IED Threat Mitigation Mobile Training Team has registered significant progress in the operationalization of its work. In May and June of this year, its Head visited UNMAS programmes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, and Somalia to support the integration of the United Nations Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Specialised Training Material (STM) into existing Troop Contributing Country capacity development and mentorship activities within MINUSMA, MONUSCO and UNSOS. The strategic objective of these visits on IED threat mitigation and EOD was to further engage with partners to promote the harmonization of international efforts in relation to explosive hazard training.

³ Action on Armed Violence, *A Decade of Explosive Violence Harm*, 2021, p. 11.

⁴ United Nations verified data refers to the period January-October 2021.

⁵ Action on Armed Violence, *A Decade of Explosive Violence Harm*, 2021, p. 11.



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In 2021, UNMAS also continued to provide IED risk mitigation technical support to the national Law Enforcement and Security Agencies (LESA) in Burkina Faso, to build their capacity to operate effectively and safely in a high threat environment. Activities included IED risk awareness training, basic search and detect training and first responder medical training. UNMAS also trained 67 instructors who teach IED risk awareness in law enforcement schools, ensuring that the Burkinabe law enforcement sector can sustain this training.

Excellencies,

The United Nations recognizes the importance of risk education activities to promote safe behavior and save lives. Such activities should reflect the diverse risks faced by girls, boys, women, men, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

In 2021, UNICEF supported a mass media campaign on explosive ordnance - including IED - risks in Yemen. This campaign reached 5.5 million people, including 2.9 million children, and combined a mix of television and radio messages, as well as text messages disseminated through three major telecommunication companies. In Burkina Faso, UNMAS is currently conducting an IED risk education campaign. In 2021, the programme has already reached over 90.000 people living in at-risk areas, particularly Internally Displaced People (IDPs).

Acknowledging the primary responsibility of States to lead IED threat mitigation efforts, the United Nations commends the hard work of the two IED Coordinators of France and Colombia and positively welcomes the text of the updated IED Political Declaration. The United Nations remains committed to providing technical and advisory support, as required, and urges all States who have not yet done so to join Amended Protocol II without delay.

Thank you.

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