



Check against delivery

United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
6th Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
(13-17 December 2021)

[Statement under agenda item 11 – General exchange of views]

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

Monsieur le Président¹,

Nous souhaitons tout d'abord vous féliciter pour votre nomination à la Présidence de la sixième Conférence d'examen de la Convention sur certaines armes classiques. Dans ces circonstances difficiles, l'Organisation des Nations Unies salue votre excellent travail qui a permis la tenue de cette Conférence et vous assure de sa coopération et de son soutien afin de parvenir à un résultat constructif.

Mr. President,

This statement is made on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA).²

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

Forty-one years after the adoption of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, indiscriminate effects of excessively injurious weapons still cause terrible human suffering. These

¹ H.E. Yann Hwang, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, President-designate of the Sixth Review Conference 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.



Check against delivery

United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
6th Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
(13-17 December 2021)

weapons threaten humanitarian efforts and hinder the implementation of the international disarmament, security, and sustainable development agendas. Over the past years, this Convention has evolved considerably through additional protocols and amendments. But it has now, once again, reached a critical juncture. How this Review Conference chooses to further prohibit and regulate certain types of conventional weapons will have a significant impact on the prevention of human suffering for the years to come.

Excellencies,

Considerable commitment, cooperation and ambition will be needed for the road that lies ahead. This is a time where, unfortunately, worrisome trends continue to be seen.

New or worsened explosive ordnance contamination is reported in areas affected by ongoing or escalating hostilities. According to United Nations reports³, explosive ordnance and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) were responsible for nearly half of all children killed or maimed in armed conflict last year. In 2020, an increasing number of magnetic Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) were used in Afghanistan. These devices are quick and easy to install, which makes countermeasures much more difficult. Alleged transfers across borders and regions of items and of methodologies for the usage of IED are reported between Burkina Faso and Mali; Somalia and Yemen; and Cameroon and Nigeria⁴.

These are, unfortunately, just some of many factors causing or aggravating harm to local populations.

In addition to these factors, civilian suffering and destruction are exacerbated when Explosive Weapons are used in Populated Areas (EWIPA). Civilians account for 90% of the

³ Report of the Secretary General, *Children and Armed Conflict*, 6 May 2021, UN Doc. A/75/873-S/2021/437.

⁴ Report of the Secretary General, *Assistance in Mine Action*, 10 August 2021, UN Doc. A/76/283, p. 2.



Check against delivery

United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
6th Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
(13-17 December 2021)

casualties caused by EWIPA, even long after hostilities have ended. Moreover, ERW hidden in rubble threaten the lives of those who already put themselves at risk to clean and rebuild urban environments after conflict.

Distinguished delegates,

Under the framework of Protocol V to this Convention, the United Nations congratulates Mr. Angus September of the Republic of South Africa and the work undertaken during the Meeting of Experts by the Coordinator on victim assistance from Austria and the Coordinator on clearance of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and technical assistance from Pakistan. Within the context of Amended Protocol II, the United Nations commends the work of Ambassador Ogasawara of Japan, the IED Coordinators from France and Colombia and the Group of Experts. The United Nations supports the text of the revised IED Declaration submitted to this Review Conference and would welcome an adoption by High Contracting Parties.

Mr. President,

In addition, the United Nations welcomes the momentum generated by the informal consultative process led by Ireland to develop a political declaration that addresses the humanitarian impact of the use of EWIPA. The United Nations echoes the call made by the Secretary-General in his latest report on *Assistance in Mine Action (A/76/283)* for parties engaging in conflict “to avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas and to develop operational policies and practices on the basis of a presumption against such use”⁵. Doing so paves the way for protecting and saving lives.

Mr. President, please allow me to conclude:

⁵Report of the Secretary General, *Assistance in Mine Action*, 10 August 2021, UN Doc. A/76/283, p. 17.



Check against delivery

United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
6th Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
(13-17 December 2021)

At the midpoint of the implementation of the United Nations Mine Action Strategy (2019-2023), enabling access to basic services and livelihoods, facilitating safe and dignified returns, and supporting economic recovery, development, and peace remain core strategic priorities of the United Nations.

Rest assured of the strong commitment of the United Nations to actively promote the universalization and full implementation of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols.

Je vous remercie, Monsieur le Président.

END