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**United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action**  
**Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)**  
**2021 Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) Meeting of Experts**  
**(18 August 2021)**

**Video Message**

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

Mr. Chair<sup>1</sup>,

Thank you for giving the floor to the United Nations Mine Action Service, UNMAS. The following statement is delivered on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action comprising the United Nations entities<sup>2</sup> involved in mine action.

Mr. President-designate, Excellencies,

Today's statement will be short and will focus on a single subject: Universalization. Protocol V was adopted by the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons on 28 November 2003.

And as of today, 96 High Contracting Parties have joined Protocol V. While the United Nations highly appreciates the accession of every single party, this number is still far away from a

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<sup>1</sup> President-designate of the 15th Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V, Mr. Angus September, Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations and International Organizations.

<sup>2</sup> The United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action consists of twelve United Nations Departments and Offices of the Secretariat, specialized agencies, funds and programmes: 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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true universalization of the Protocol, and far behind the universalization of some other treaties. Particularly in recent years, there have been only few new accessions to Protocol V. This is concerning.

Explosive Remnants of War are - as their name indicates – a typical aftereffect of any conflict; and among the seemingly endless threats that face conflict-affected populations, explosive ordnance contamination ranks high. This unfortunately also includes the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. In urban settings, Explosive Remnants of War pose many additional challenges for the clearance operations themselves. When these deadly threats are buried beneath collapsed buildings or in piles of rubble, they add yet another layer of risk and complexity to the already dangerous work carried out by clearance personnel.

Excellencies,

The world continues to go through turbulent times; conflicts are increasingly protracted and more intense and the United Nations continues to struggle every day to assist record numbers of civilians, internally displaced persons and refugees fleeing death and destruction.

The United Nations calls for further efforts to promote the universalization of the Convention and its protocols – in particular Protocol V; and urges States, who have not yet done so, to join the Convention and its Protocols without delay.

Advancing the universalization of the Convention and its Protocols are critical to reducing the cost of today's conflicts. Universalization and compliance by all parties to conflict are core to prevention and protection.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.