



**United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action  
Informal Intersessional Meeting of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention  
(8-9 June)**

**Plenary discussion: meeting our aspirations of 2025**

Mr President,

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA), comprising several United Nations entities involved in mine action.

At the Third Review Conference held in 2014, States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (APMBC), and partners, adopted the Maputo +15 Declaration. They underlined their aspirations and committed to intensify efforts to comply with states respective time-bound obligations, to the fullest extent possible by 2025, as outlined in the Convention.

Since the Convention was adopted two decades ago, mine affected States, with the support of the international community, have made substantial progress in addressing the threat of anti-personnel mines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERWs). 162 States have now joined. This immense progress is reflected most notably by:

- The significant reduction in casualties over the last two decades. In 1999, there were approximately 25 landmine casualties reported each day. In 2014 there were 10 landmine casualties reported each day – around a 60% reduction.<sup>1</sup>
- The destruction of over 51 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines with United Nations assistance.

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<sup>1</sup>International Campaign to Ban Landmines; <http://www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2016/landmine-monitor-2016/casualties-and-victim-assistance.aspx>



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- The increase of governments' capacity to protect populations from the threat of mines and ERWs. The M&E mechanism shows steady progress towards effective national mine action structures and programmes<sup>2</sup>.
- The significant reduction in use, transfer and production of landmines: Between October 2015 and October 2016, three States - not Party –were recorded by the Landmine Monitor to have used landmines.

In Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) last year, for example, UNMAS cleared 8,500 items of ERW, mines, and rounds of small arms ammunition in the eastern and central parts of the country. 62% of recorded suspect hazardous areas have now been returned to communities. Moreover, with UNICEF support, 618 teachers received MRE in highly affected provinces. Subject to available funding, estimated at \$7 million, the Government of DRC is expected to complete clearance by January 2021, in compliance with its Article 5 deadline.

Yet, in the context of continued and escalating conflict, meeting our aspirations for 2025 will require renewed effort and increased cooperation. To this end, UNDP provides support to Member States with planning and policy formulation towards fulfilling their Convention obligations. It focuses, in particular, on capacity development support in formulating national strategies and extension requests where necessary.

The United Nations is deeply concerned that our collective success might be overshadowed by complex, and protracted crises, such as those in Iraq, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen, and the Lake Chad Basin where civilians continue to face the threat of mines contamination. As a result, twenty years of progress in casualty-reduction is now at risk with mine/ERW casualty numbers rising to their highest point since 2006. In 2015, The

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<sup>2</sup> Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism for the United Nations Strategy for Mine Action 2013-2018: Report from the 5th Round of Data Collection; March 2017



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International Campaign to Ban Landmines reported that 6,451 casualties were recorded, approximately 18 casualties reported each day<sup>3</sup>. In addition to the human and humanitarian impact, these risks hinder prospects for socio-economic recovery and development. The increase in the number of submission of extension requests, demonstrate that obstacles towards our aspirations set up by the Maputo +15 Declaration are real. Despite the complexity of these challenges, efforts are still being made to build national capacities to conduct mine action programming.

In Iraq, UNMAS provides to national authorities technical expertise to develop the Government National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2017-2021, and guidance on their Article 5 extension request. Indeed, the Government of Iraq faces an unprecedented amount of explosive hazard contamination that exceeds its current capacities. With new contamination in areas retaken from Daesh, it is difficult to gain an accurate picture of the exact scope and scale of the overall contamination. UNMAS is supporting Government and UN stabilization priorities and humanitarian response efforts through its threat impact assessments, emergency risk education and survey and clearance operations in recently retaken areas.

In Yemen, UNDP is providing support to the National Mine Action Committee (NMAC) and the Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre (YEMAC) in developing a new operational framework for mine action, assisting in emergency Landmine/UXO survey and disposal activities, as well as developing the national mine action information management system.

Additionally, due to the active presence of Boko Haram, new explosive threats have emerged in the Lake Chad Basin region, and especially in the conflict affected parts of

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<sup>3</sup> International Campaign to Ban Landmines: <http://www.the-monitor.org/media/2386748/Landmine-Monitor-2016-web.pdf>



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Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. The scale of this new contamination, including from Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), remains difficult to determine. These new contaminated areas are reversing progress towards the mine-free vision.

Since 2015, UNOCHA, UNDP, UNICEF and UNHCR have supported the development of emergency risk education campaigns for at-risk populations in areas affected by the Lake Chad conflict. Moreover, after requests from the respective Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators (UN RC/HC) in Cameroon and Nigeria, UNMAS recently deployed explosive threat mitigation experts. In Cameroon, UNMAS delivered explosive threat awareness training to humanitarian personnel, and assessed the need for explosive threat mitigation measures. In Nigeria, UNMAS was able to confirm the presence of explosive threats by conducting a scoping mission to assess the humanitarian impact of these in the three North-east Nigerian states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe.

Despite significant challenges, the achievements collectively accomplished in the last two decades offer much promise that a world free of mines by 2025 is still possible. To conclude, this success story of international cooperation is being threatened by protracted crises in many parts of the world. However, we are confident that if mine action efforts remain comprehensive and focused on people and institutions in mine affected states, our vision for a world free of mine by 2025 is still within reach. The United Nations stands ready to support countries in meeting their Implementation obligations and reaching this vision.

Thank you.