



## United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

### Sixteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (18 December - 21 December)

#### Victim Assistance

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

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.

Every day, at least twenty people fall victim to landmines and other explosive remnants of war. The Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism of the United Nations Mine Action Strategy identified, in those countries contributing data, a 40 per cent rise in casualties, between 2015 and 2016; 75% were civilians. This week, the Landmine Monitor reported over 8,500 casualties in 2016, a 19% percent increase compare to 2015.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, child casualties documented in 2016 were the highest annual total since the Monitor began its recording in 1999.

It is essential that survivors have equal opportunities to realize their rights and be integrated as equal members of their societies. The needs of their families and communities must also be met. For them, Victim Assistance is of utmost importance.

The United Nations commends the Austrian Presidency for putting the issue at the centre of the agenda and welcomes the positive trend in the number of reports submitted by States Parties, including information on their victim assistance efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> H.E. Thomas Hajnoczi, Ambassador of Austria to the United Nations

<sup>2</sup> The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) / United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) (Chair), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Development Programme (UNDP), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) (Observer), and the World Bank (Observer).

<sup>3</sup> Landmine Monitor Report 2017: 8,605 casualties were recorded in 2016. There were 6,967 casualties in 2015.



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The recent General Assembly resolution on “Assistance in Mine Action”<sup>4</sup> urges States to provide assistance to victims of mines and explosive remnants of war, and to take measures that are consistent with the principles of International Humanitarian Law.

The United Nations is at the forefront of efforts to implement this resolution, including under the broader framework of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). I am pleased to report that in 85 per cent of countries where the United Nations has a mine action presence, some form of victim assistance is provided.<sup>5</sup>

**Partnerships** are central to effective victim assistance programmes. In Cambodia UNICEF worked together with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation to coordinate victim assistance. To date, over 750 survivors of mines and explosive remnants of war have received emergency care, rehabilitation, and livelihood assistance.

To ensure sustainability of Victim Assistance **supporting national authorities** in establishing appropriate **national policy is vital**. 71 per cent of countries and territories where the United Nations has a presence have established national disability policies.<sup>6</sup> In Sudan, UNMAS coordinated the work of multiple victim assistance stakeholders, including government entities and national NGOs in preparation of a multi-year National Strategic Framework for Victim Assistance and an associated multi-year work plan.

**Coherent with the 2030 Agenda commitment to “leave no-one behind”** in Afghanistan, UNMAS introduced a mobile clinic to improve access to isolated communities and marginalised groups in a country where 90 per cent of the population live more than 100 kilometres away from a rehabilitation centre.

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<sup>4</sup> A/RES/72/75

<sup>5</sup> Report of the 6th Round of Data Collection; M&E Mechanism of the UN Strategy for Mine Action 2013 – 2018; United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action; July 2017

<sup>6</sup> *idem*



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Female physiotherapists have been trained so that injured women who cannot travel independently can be reached at home. Adhering to the 2030 Agenda's guiding principle of participation, in Tajikistan survivors' organizations and networks are included in national and local government dialogue, supported by UNDP.

Despite progress, challenges remain.

Challenges remain in ensuring the accessibility and quality of services for victims and survivors.

Challenges remain in providing emergency health care and first aid in conflict zones that have become too dangerous for humanitarian workers to operate.

Challenges remain in collecting up-to-date, disaggregated and comprehensive data that will provide a baseline for evidence-based, targeted and effective programming. This year Somalia requested resources for a countrywide survey to assess the needs of survivors and the services available; to date they have not been received.

It is our collective responsibility to help affected States to deliver appropriate services to affected communities.

Thank you.