



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

Eleventh Conference of High Contracting Parties to Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War

Statement under General Exchange of Views (20 November 2017)

Mr President¹,

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action comprising the United Nations entities involved in mine action.²

Humanitarian Mine Action programmes continue worldwide to make progress in the clearance and release of land and infrastructure that have been contaminated by mines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). The United Nations Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Mechanism indicates that in the 33 contaminated countries/territories which participated in 2016, 44 per cent of contaminated land had been released. Moreover, in the ten countries where it was possible to collect information, 157 hospitals, 273 educational facilities, 531 markets, 808 water points, 7 religious facilities, and 466 government buildings have been cleared of contamination as of last December.³

Yet, new contamination, including new contamination from active conflicts, has been identified and/or created at a faster pace between July 2015 and July 2016.⁴ Conflicts continue to kill and injure, with a 40 per cent rise in casualties between 2015 and 2016. And ERW kill and injure more than mines. In 2016, ERW caused 85% of total casualties in Somalia, 66% in Palestine, and 57% in Afghanistan.⁵

¹ Andre Pung; Ambassador of Estonia; President-designate of the Eleventh Conference of High Contracting Parties to Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War

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 Peacekeeping 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.

³ 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

⁴ idem

⁵ idem



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In the context of protracted and escalating conflicts in which civilians continue to be vulnerable to explosive debris of war, we commend the decision of the Conference to prioritize discussion on the practical implementation of Article 4 on the recording, retaining, and transmission of information on the use and abandonment of ERW.

Article 4 provides an added-value for the Mine Action community to tailor programmes, including the survey, marking, clearance and risk education operations. With accurate information, mine action organizations can prioritize their resources more effectively, they can target the location of their surveys more precisely with less resources, they can put marking to highlight dangerous areas faster; they can select cost-effective techniques and tools for decontamination, and they can design mine risk education to vulnerable communities more suited to the explosive remnants of war.

Excellences,

Sharing information can accelerate decontamination, protect people and save money.

The United Nations regrets that only 23 High Contracting Parties out of 93 reported to have implemented the article 4. We encourage all States to integrate the provision into military doctrine, operations procedures, and trainings to create a culture of recording. Moreover, the use of the Technical Annex to Article 4 will result in the highest quality of information.

The universalization of Protocol V and its effective implementation, along with strict compliance with International Humanitarian Law, remain critical to alleviate and prevent the human suffering caused by ERW.

As we speak, many conflicts remain active and will have long-lasting effects, sometimes for decades, hampering the socio-economic recovery of communities. In concluding, the United Nations calls upon States and other parties who are currently, or have been engaged in armed



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conflict to deposit with the United Nations or other appropriate third party, or the party in control of the contaminated territory, information on the type and quantity of explosives used, as well as on targeted locations. Information should be shared without delay to ensure rapid intervention from the mine action community and save lives and limbs.

Thank you.