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United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
Intersessional Meetings (APMBC)
(18-20 June 2024)

[Statement under agenda item 3 on Article 5 Implementation]

Mr. President¹,

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

Excellencies,

We would like to highlight the support provided by the UN to reach the goals of the Ottawa Convention in Afghanistan and Cyprus which are requesting an extension under matters related to the mandate of the Committee on Art. 5 Implementation and in Cambodia, South Sudan, Ukraine, and Yemen which are submitting updated workplans. IACG MA members working in these countries intend to support the national authorities in the fulfilment of their Article 5 obligations up to and during the requested extension period.

In its extension request, Afghanistan focuses on survey to understand and record the scope of explosive ordnance (EO) contamination in the country. In addition to the survey, the recorded

¹ Dr. Ly Thuch, Senior Minister and First Vice President of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), President of the Fifth Review Conference “The Siem Reap-Angkor Summit on a Mine-Free Worlds”.

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.



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EO contamination areas would also be cleared and released based on their priority and impact. The request was developed in consultation with and support of the UN, mine action implementing partners, and DMAC staff.

The UN in Afghanistan coordinates explosive threat mitigation in support of vital humanitarian relief operations. Over the past five years³, 5,347 casualties were recorded in Afghanistan requiring significant victim assistance. Regrettably, however, mine action is among the severely underfunded sectors in Afghanistan, with several donors having either stopped or significantly reduced their contributions. This is having a visible impact. For example, there are six national implementing partners with 30 years of experience in mine action. These organizations are on the verge of closing in 2024 as they are mostly dependent on UN mine action interventions.

Turning to Cyprus, there has been no change from the previous extension request. The Republic of Cyprus has stated it has removed all anti-personnel mines and is in compliance, but as it cannot access the hazardous areas in the north, it is unable to remove the remaining mines. The UN in Cyprus continues to raise the issue of mines and the clearance of not only the anti-personnel mines but all mines in line with the mission mandate. Currently there is no political agreement from either side and so there is no progress on this issue.

In South Sudan, the UN is supporting national efforts by neutralizing and mitigating explosive ordnance threats, including through survey, and clearance of potentially hazardous areas. Subsequently, cleared land has been used for UN bases, displaced persons sites, medical facilities, and schools, while cleared roads facilitated the safe movement of civilians, enhanced the mobility of peacekeepers and enabled humanitarian actors to deliver lifesaving assistance.

³ Interactive Dashboard of the UN Mine Action Strategy: <https://www.mineaction.org/en/interactive-dashboard-of-un-mine-action-strategy>



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In Ukraine, since February 2022, there has been an industrial use of landmines along with cluster munitions, artillery shells and a vast array of weaponry. The impact of this contamination extends globally and undermines food security. According to government estimates, land currently contaminated by explosive ordnance provided food for 81 million people before the war, mostly in middle- and lower-income countries. Now, even with the 3,500 demining engineers in Ukraine, it will take at least 20 years to clear the agricultural land alone. The UN is supporting the Government in fulfilling its commitment to the APMBC by training and equipping humanitarian demining units of the State Emergency Services, providing technical support and advisory, and assisting in the coordination of various mine action activities. The Mine Action Area of Responsibility in Ukraine co-coordinated by UNDP and the Association of Ukrainian Deminers has established working groups to coordinate risk education (led by UNICEF) and victim assistance (co-led by the Danish Refugee Council and Humanity & Inclusion).

According to UN data, there were more than 2,000 people killed and injured⁴ in Yemen from 2019 to 2023. Despite the very complex political and security environment, the submission by the Republic of Yemen of a detailed work plan towards the Article 5 deadline of March 2028, is a clear sign of commitment towards the treaty obligations. The United Nations stands ready to provide the necessary support, including capacity building of national institutions, to enable Yemen to meet its treaty obligations. We emphasize the importance of inclusiveness when it comes to planning and as such call on Yemen to submit a revised work plan that considers all governorates with records of antipersonnel landmines, within its areas of control.

Lastly, the UN is committed to supporting Cambodia's endeavour to achieve a mine-free status by 2025. We will continue to mobilize resources from current and potential donors to contribute to this endeavour through the ongoing "Clearing for Results" project.

⁴ Sources: UN M&E mechanism and Landmine Monitor.



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The UN will continue to update international mine action standards and facilitate the sharing of expertise to enhance the effectiveness and safety of clearance operations, with a view to leaving the environment in a state that is similar or better than before mine action operations commenced.

Thank you.

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