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United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention: Twenty-second Meeting of the States Parties
(1 - 5 December 2025)

Statement under agenda item 9(b)(i) Clearing mined areas

[delivered by Mr. Hugues Laurence, UNICEF on Wednesday, 3 December]

Madam President¹,

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

Excellencies,

The clearance of lands affected by mines and other explosive ordnance is a vital lifeline for affected communities. Clearance of contaminated areas prevents death and injuries, restores access to critical infrastructure, supports livelihoods and contributes to stability and development. Clearance is at the heart of our objective of a world free from the threat of mines. The UN stands ready to work with all partners to accelerate mine clearance, to achieve our shared objective and save millions from the scourge of mines and their consequences.

Intersectoral approach, knowledge sharing

Effective clearance depends on strong partnerships and intersectoral approaches. The United Nations works with national authorities, humanitarian and development actors, national and international NGOs, in peacekeeping missions and in non-mission settings around the globe.

¹ H.E. Ms. ICHIKAWA Tomiko, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament, President of the Twenty-second Meeting of the States Parties (22MSP).

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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In Syria, for example, UNMAS is working with UN partners and transitional authorities on the survey and clearance of suspected hazardous areas and is planning to work with the World Bank to enable key sectors to recover and to reconstruct critical infrastructure. In peacekeeping missions, UNMAS is also scaling up triangular partnerships to pair technical support, training and enabling assets with the peacekeeping contingents most exposed to asymmetric threats. This approach ensures that peacekeepers can operate safely while maintaining humanitarian access, protecting civilians and delivering on their mandates.

IEDs, Climate and Innovation

The widespread use of improvised mines and improvised explosive devices by Non-State Armed Groups is also a major challenge in many States that are still affected by Anti-Personnel Mines, including Burkina Faso, Colombia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria and Somalia. The increased use of sophisticated devices heightens risk for civilians and humanitarian workers. UNMAS is supporting 17 African Union Member States in developing Counter-IED capacity for the search and detection of IEDs and has trained 300 national instructors in 2025. This project is undertaken under the UN Department of Peace Operations' Triangular Partnership Programme, an initiative that brings together the UN Secretariat, Troop-Contributing Countries receiving training, and supporting Member States acting as trainers.

Beyond the obvious direct threats posed by mines and other explosive ordnance, toxic debris from these weapons contaminates land, water, and ecosystems - compounding risks for communities, hindering safe clearance, and impeding long-term development. Climate change further intensifies these impacts and complicates survey and clearance efforts, as we have seen with flash floods in Afghanistan and heavy rains in Abyei.

The United Nations is working closely with partners to leverage technology to make mine action safer, faster, and more cost-effective. For example, satellite imagery and AI are being used to develop mapping, damage assessment, and contamination assessments tools that



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enhance the operational effectiveness of clearance activities. In Ukraine, remote-sensing tools and data are guiding the survey and clearance of agricultural land, accelerating the return of livelihoods. We welcome global initiatives aimed at unlocking the full potential of new survey and clearance technologies and look forward to receiving the report from the Innovation Conference held in Luxembourg in October by the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining.

Conclusion

We are committed, together with partners and national authorities, to improving the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of mine action operations. The United Nations stands ready to deepen cooperation with all States to accelerate clearance and strengthen national capacities.

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