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The Government of Italy continues its support to explosive hazards management activities in Iraq

Baghdad, 23 November 2022 - The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) welcomes an additional contribution of EUR 1,000,000 (approximately USD 999,500) from the Government of Italy, which will support life-saving mine action activities in Iraq. Activities will include delivering sustainable and efficient explosive hazard management and providing technical and advisory support to national mine action authorities.

Iraq suffers from various types of contamination due to decades of war and conflicts that is now threatening the lives and safety of Iraqi communities. The financial contribution from the Government of Italy will support the clearance of explosive ordnance in the areas liberated from ISIL and in southern Iraq. It will further support explosive ordnance risk education efforts to protect the most at-risk populations, notably the returnees and IDPs, as well as delivering explosive ordnance risk education/sessions for at-risk workers who undertake high-risk activities.

The generous contribution will support a nationally led and implemented mine action response. UNMAS provides training and technical advice to national authorities to further enhance the Iraqi national clearance capacity in line with national and international mine action standards. Furthermore, it supports the Government of Iraq in strengthening coordination between government entities and supports mine action decision-making across the country.

Through this contribution, national capacity enhancement will also be supported through a partnership model that brings together international mine action NGOs with local NGOs to pave the way for localization and a sustainable mine action response in Iraq.

On the occasion, H.E. Maurizio Greganti, Ambassador of Italy, stated *“We commend the work of UNMAS in Iraq, as demining is a key factor to facilitate the return of IDPs to their communities of origin as a safe and stable environment. Italy has long been a friend of the Iraqi people and supporter of the stabilization of the Country, and we are proud to contribute also through mine action response and explosive hazard management.”*

Mr. Cabasino - Director of the Amman Office of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) confirmed that *“the Italian Cooperation has been contributing to UNMAS activities in Iraq since 2016, which is a testimony to Italy’s full commitment to supporting mine actions in context characterized by humanitarian needs and protracted crises, thus protecting civilians, enabling humanitarian action, socio-economic development, and peacebuilding.”*

“The generous contribution from the government of Italy will support the government of Iraq in protecting vulnerable civilians from the threat posed by explosive ordnance and will also enable safe and dignified returns of IDPs, provide safe spaces for children to

play in safety, and support affected communities to use their farmlands freely,” said Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, Chief Mine Action Programme, UNMAS Iraq.

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