



UNMAS Statement for ECOSOC HAS 2018 General Discussion

**Thursday, 21 June, 2018, 3:00pm
ECOSOC Chamber**

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is not one country where the United Nations Mine Action Service, or UNMAS, is asked to operate where the civilian populations and humanitarian aid workers movements are not affected by the threat of explosive devices; landmines, explosive remnants or war or improvised explosive devices.

Mandated by the General Assembly and Security Council as the United Nations system coordinator for mine action, UNMAS leads, coordinates and implements the humanitarian response to this vulnerability.

UNMAS programmes are delivering in some of the most complex conflict environments, from Mosul to Mogadishu, from Benghazi to Bentiu. In these challenging contexts, humanitarian mine action responds to the aims of this year's themes.

For example, UNMAS has developed gender-sensitive risk education campaigns in South Sudan **reduce the vulnerability** of women navigating explosive hazard contamination affecting their access to water sources and firewood.

When explosive hazards are removed from homes, streets and infrastructure in Mosul, **humanity is restored** as families are able to safely return home and re-establish their businesses, **reducing humanitarian need**.

When victims of IED attacks in Afghanistan quickly receive appropriate assistance, they are **not left behind** as they seek to recover and rebuild their lives.

Humanitarian mine action is not a concept. For the millions of girls, boys, men and women living in contaminated communities across the world, it is an everyday danger. It affects their daily decisions on how to go to school, the office or the market.

My request to you is to consider humanitarian mine action at the **earliest stages of planning and programming humanitarian response** in conflict-affected settings.

I simply ask that you put yourself in the shoes of the young Syrian girl who has to consider new explosive hazards that she may encounter on her route to school after last night's bombing.

Over the last two decades of coordinating humanitarian mine action, UNMAS has learnt many lessons; two I want to share today.

We have learnt that we can best serve the humanitarian community when we are involved in the strategic planning of a humanitarian response. In many situations, humanitarian mine action is a pre-cursor to the delivery of other humanitarian aid. Mine action must not be an after-thought.

We have also learnt that funding for humanitarian response is most effective when resources for mine action are considered in the broader picture and allocated at the outset. Again, mine action must not be an after-thought.

If – or when - you require expertise in this area as you develop strategies, do not hesitate to call on us - UNMAS is your mine action service.

Thank you.