



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
2019 Meeting of High Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Statement under General Exchange of Views
Wednesday, 13 November 2019

Mr. Chairperson¹,

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action comprising the United Nations entities² involved in mine action. The UN inter-agency Group associates itself to the statement made on behalf of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and would like to highlight the following.

Excellencies,

Among the myriad threats that face conflict-affected populations, explosive ordnance contamination ranks high, affecting countless civilians.

¹ H.E Farukh Amil, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva; Chair, 2019 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW.

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.



The Secretary General consistently denounces the -too frequent- blatant disregard for International Humanitarian Law, in particular when civilians and civilian objects and infrastructure are being deliberately targeted.

The United Nations reiterates the importance of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, and to its Protocols. We commend the work conducted within this important forum and remain committed to contributing to the discussions of the High Contracting Parties and to assisting them.

The United Nations, once again, urges States who have not yet joined the Convention and its Protocols to do so without delay. Universalization and compliance by all parties to conflicts are core to prevention and protection.

Two months ago, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross underlined the devastating humanitarian consequences of urban warfare and the widespread use of explosive weapons; they issued a joint appeal to States and parties to conflicts to “to employ strategies and tactics that take combat outside populated areas to try to reduce urban fighting altogether [...]”. They [States and parties to conflicts] should recognize that they cannot fight in populated areas in the way they would in open battlefields”.



States-led efforts to elaborate a political declaration addressing the humanitarian consequences of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas are commendable. States must reaffirm their strict respect and compliance with International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. In addition to States' general commitment to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, such a declaration must also refer to the importance of ERW risk education, clearance and assistance to victims, as well as States' commitments to support and facilitate humanitarian mine action.

Excellencies,

In 2018, 21 per cent of explosive ordnance casualties were caused by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) operating like anti-personnel landmines.³ The scale, lethality, sophistication and evolving designs of IEDs pose multifaceted challenges and have required affected stakeholders to significantly adjust their approaches and methodologies.

For many years, UNMAS has been strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to mitigate the threat posed by IEDs; it led the elaboration of UN IED Disposal standards and the update International Mine Action Standards; thanks to interested States' partnership and financial support to UNMAS, the United Nations and the mine action sector, will soon benefit from the development of a unique hub of expertise on "smart improvised explosive device threat mitigation technologies".

³ Report of the Secretary General, Assistance in Mine Action, 6 August 2019, UN Doc. A/74/288, para. 5.



Mr. Chairman, Excellencies,

Studies conducted by SIPRI and the GICHD conclude that half of the recorded casualties from Anti-Vehicle Mines are civilians.⁴ The United Nations witnesses their impact on humans in a variety of conflict environment.

The United Nations continues to support efforts made at reducing the excessively injurious and indiscriminate harm of Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) on civilians and the adverse impact of these explosive weapons on the delivery of humanitarian aid and social and economic development.

The world continues to go through turbulent times; conflicts are increasingly protracted and more intense; the volume and destructive effects of conventional weaponry seem endlessly “unprecedented” and the United Nations continues to struggle every day to assist record numbers of civilians, internally displaced persons and refugees fleeing death and destruction.

Increasing advocacy efforts for the universalization of the Convention and its Protocols and actively participating in supporting the implementation of all their provisions, taking into account gender and age specificities, are critical to reducing the human and financial cost of today’s conflicts.

I thank you.

⁴ SIPRI and GICHD, Global Mapping and Analysis of Anti-Vehicle Incidents in 2017, April 2018.