

MINE AWARENESS DAY IN DRC: THE ROLE OF WOMEN IS ESSENTIAL



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[04 April 2018] *In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the International Day for Mine Awareness and Mine Action was celebrated in 5 major cities where UNMAS is active: Kinshasa (the capital), Goma in North Kivu, Bukavu in South Kivu, Bunia in Ituri and Kananga in Kasai Central. Mine action actors joined efforts for the success of these events organised this year under the national theme: **"Women in Mine Action"**.*

The various celebrations were attended by the country's highest authorities, representatives of Embassies, UN agencies, journalists, national and international NGOs and students.



"Choosing this theme was not random," said the UNMAS Country Director, Philippe Renard, "women play a vital role in Mine action. They sensitize populations to the risks of mines and explosive hazards; they assist victims and also participate in demining and destruction of explosive remnants of war." He congratulated all the mine action actors who understood this role and encourage female representation within their programs, whether in mine clearance, risk education, assistance to victims or in advocacy.

The Congolese government, via the Congolese Centre for Mine Action, CCLAM, has reiterated its commitment to fulfil its obligations as per the Ottawa Convention which it signed in 2002 and to make the country 'free of mines' by 2021. The Vice-Minister of the Interior and

Security, Mr. Basile Olongo, called on Mine Action partners to support the implementation of the revised National Action Plan, validated in 2017 with the support of UNMAS.

The day was also marked by the commitment of the People of Japan, to continue to support Mine action activities in the DRC. It should be noted that the Government of Japan is working with various Mine action operators in the country such as UNMAS, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and Mine Advisory Group (MAG International).

It was also an opportunity for DRC Mine action operators to present their activities to the general public through stands and a photo exhibit.