



**Statement**

**by**

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to the United Nations**

**at the**

**Fourth Committee**

**item 51: Assistance in mine action**

**New York, October 16, 2015**

***CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY***

***Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations  
866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 531, New York, NY 10017***

**Statement on mine action  
Item 51**

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to start by congratulating you and the bureau members on your election. My delegation is confident that under your able leadership the committee will conclude its work in an efficient manner. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report under consideration.

The 7.9 million people living in proximity to areas contaminated with mines and/or explosive remnants of war and the additional 4.7 million who are at risk cannot be left behind. They should be liberated from the daily fear of children being injured on their way to school, of women being targeted in their backyards, and of men being maimed or killed in their agriculture fields.

Lebanon recognizes the major efforts undertaken by UNMAS in the field, in close cooperation with other UN agencies, to act swiftly. In this regard, the review of the midterm strategy with its 4 objectives highlights the achievements made until today and the challenges that lie ahead.

My country presents a clear case of a heavily contaminated area in light of its size and density of population. My country also presents a clear case of positive trend of partnerships. Suffice to mention that the Lebanese Armed Forces, in collaboration with UNIFIL have cleaned approximately 4.8 square kilometers of affected land and destroyed more than 35,000 unexploded ordnances and mines. More could have been done if Israel provided full data on the landmines it planted in Lebanon and the locations of more than 4 million cluster munitions it pounded on Lebanon in 2006.

Moreover, the Lebanon Mine Action Center (LMAC) established in 1998 continues its partnership with the UNMAS team in Lebanon to provide a rapid response to the threat of mines. In 2011, the National Mine Action Strategy (2011-2020) was launched, with three major goals, to achieve a country free of mines by 2020, and to fulfill Lebanon's commitments under the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions.

From 2011 and 2013, despite the instability, insecurity and influx of refugees, Lebanon succeeded in achieving 2 goals: First, LMAC successfully enabled affected communities to better manage risks through regular mine-risk education workshops and trainings, and through the use of information technology and social media to raise awareness; second, the Ministry of Social Affairs has issued disability cards to all the victims of land-mines to guarantee the full enjoyment of their rights. However, the third goal of the strategy, relating to the total clearance and release of agricultural lands was impeded due to a funding shortfall, the non-provision of complete mine maps by Israel, and the discovery of new contaminated areas.

Two years ago, we had the honor to inform you that Lebanon was in the process of establishing the first Regional School for Humanitarian Demining. Today, the school has already begun 'train the trainer' courses and adopted a curriculum in demining operations. The school will also train specialists from the region as Lebanon has been acting as a Mine Action focal point amongst Arabic speaking countries.

Lebanon is ready to share its success story and technical expertise in demining, namely through partnerships with regional and international actors, in particular the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and the French Army.

Lebanon highlighted these priorities and challenges in all meetings to the Convention on Cluster Munitions from Costa Rica in 2014 to Geneva in 2015.

Mr. Chairman,

Lebanon has gone a long way to bring the threat and impact of mines and explosives remnants of war under control, mainly due to the much-appreciated support of UNMAS, the European Union, UNDP, UNIFIL, the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement and others. In this regard, we call to increase the international support for clearance operations and socio-economic development projects in order to enable Lebanon to meet its targets by 2020 and become a success story for the international community.

I thank you.