



Statement

by

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants**

at the

Fourth Committee

Item 48: Assistance in mine action

New York, November 1, 2013

Check Against Delivery

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

Mr. Chairman,

Long after the fighting is over and a conflict comes to an end, mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war (ERWs) continue to devastate lives and impede the path to development, security, and stability. The consequences of these indiscriminate weapons affect all aspects of human security: threatening health and safety, robbing peoples of their livelihood, and hindering access to essential services and delivery of humanitarian aid.

Lebanon recognizes the United Nations Mine Action Service, UNMAS, for spearheading these efforts to address the needs of communities and victims. When an entire community is held hostage by hazardous fields, mine action clearance becomes an integral part of peacekeeping, peacebuilding, post-conflict recovery, as well as humanitarian relief and sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

My country presents a serious case of the devastating impact of mines and ERWs. In 2006, after having achieved progress towards becoming an impact-free state, the south of Lebanon suffered from heavy re-contamination when Israel dropped more than 4 million cluster munitions. In Lebanon, this problem is particularly acute as the level of contamination is high with regards to its small size and population density. Today, one-fifth of the citizens are in direct threat of the infected areas, obstructing the socio-economic development and reconstruction efforts, thus reinforcing poverty and fear of movement in communities already amongst the poorest in the country.

Lebanon welcomes the efforts of the UNMAS Team in Lebanon in their work on the ground and in partnership with the Lebanon Mine Action Center (LMAC), and in providing resource mobilization assistance. Lebanon emphasizes mine risk education, victim assistance and rapid response as the strategic measures towards protecting civilians, facilitating humanitarian access, and building national capacities. These interventions are smart, specific, time-bound and measurable- with the dual aim of immediate relief and long-term recovery. The UNMAS Team and LMAC also work in collaboration with UNIFIL towards supporting mandate implementation and in conducting demining operations in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and the Lebanese National Mine Action Standards.

While we commend the progress made by the Lebanese demining teams and clearance achievements of mined areas and fields, mine infestation remains a serious challenge in southern Lebanon, where landmines continue to pose a daily threat to the Lebanese civilians and remain a constant reminder of war. The ongoing collaboration of national and international actors is of great importance to Lebanon's efforts to meet its obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) in order to become free of cluster munitions by 2016. Lebanon actively participated in the Oslo Process that created the Convention, and as President in 2011 hosted the Second Meeting of States Parties to the CCM.

This year, we are proud to announce the establishment of the Regional Humanitarian Demining School, in collaboration with the French Army, which will begin its training this month.

Lebanon expresses its gratitude towards the donors, especially to UNMAS, the European Union, UNDP, the office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (WRA) and others.

Mr. Chairman,

Realizing a landmine free area is less costly than the resumption of conflict. When we put the contamination into both a strategic and human perspective, we realize that action for clearance is action towards saving lives, enabling development, and building and enhancing security and stability.