

Intervention of the Delegation of Lebanon on Cooperation and Assistance

CCM Inter-sessional Meeting

Geneva, April 15-18 2013

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Lebanese delegation I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the governments of Mexico and Sweden for their relentless coordination efforts.

As noted in previous interventions by the Lebanese delegation, Lebanon has been doing its utmost to ensure full and efficient implementation of the Convention in terms of clearance of contaminated areas, care and rehabilitation for victims, and risk education.

For 2012, there was a shortfall of USD \$21,133,623.05 in relation to the implementation of the strategy. The funds available for Mine Victims Assistance and Mine Risk Education were particularly low. It is noteworthy that Lebanon should secure proper funding in order to meet its international obligations.

In order to overcome some of the funding challenges and to enable the implementation of this Strategy, the Lebanese Government contributes salaries, equipment, and the running costs of the LAF regiment's two engineering companies, LAF manual clearance teams, dog teams, mechanical machinery, and salaries, equipment, and running costs for LMAC and RMAC. This contribution to mine action is estimated conservatively at about USD \$8 million.

In addition, the Ministry of Health provides medical care to survivors and the Ministry of Social Affairs provides socio-economic rehabilitation services. The cost of these services is being undertaken to provide an accurate figure but it is currently estimated at around USD \$250,000.

Resource mobilization is undertaken conjointly by the LMAC Director and operators. The following donors are currently funding mine action in Lebanon either through UNDP or the LMAP NGO partners: Belgium, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Norway, Spain, the United States, China, Austria, South Korea, Australia and the Netherlands.

Lebanon has been working closely with both national and international NGOs to help implement our commitments under the CCM, as set out in Action #34 of the Vientiane Action Plan. Mine Risk Education, Victim Assistance and demining are implemented solely by national and international NGOs. LMAC, in partnership with international NGOs, is also working to foster the transfer of responsibilities from international to national technical and management personnel, as it is expected that when Mine Action is implemented independently from direct international technical support, cost effectiveness will improve.

Lebanon has responded to Action #29 of the Vientiane Action Plan by mobilizing resources through innovative sources of financing and reaching out to the private sector. LMAC has a very successful partnership with BLOM Bank, one of the oldest and largest banks in Lebanon. In addition, other partnerships with the private sector were initiated, such as Jamal Trust Bank.

Despite all these efforts, Lebanon continues to seek the necessary technical, financial and material support of states “who are in a position to do so”, as is their obligation under Article 6 of the CCM. We therefore hope that such states will respond positively to the needs of Lebanon, in particular by taking heed of Action #38 of the Vientiane Action Plan, which encourages states to “promptly assist States Parties that have requested support” and to “strive to ensure continuity, predictability and sustainability of resource commitments”.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Lebanon made sure to fully utilize its capacity in sharing knowledge and skills with countries in need. Over the years of its operations, LMAC, in cooperation with UNDP, has been keen on building local capacities of staff and has gained the reputation of a focal point whose advice is being sought out for best practices in the region. In a short period of time, Lebanon has come to play a core role in the MENA region. This achievement would not have been possible without the teams' competence and the extensive capacity building provided to them over the past years (Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) trainings in Denmark, Information Management Systems of Mine Action Trainings in Geneva, Senior Management courses at James Madison University, etc.). Lebanon has been providing technical as well as operational advice to many countries.

During 2012, an Arabic Outreach Conference was organized in Dubai in which all mine-affected Arab countries came together to discuss coordination efforts and agree on the way forward. Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Jordan, Sudan, Mauritania, Iraq, Palestine, Morocco, and Algeria participated in this conference. There was a general agreement on the need to Arabize the support documents and training targeting the Arab region. Lebanon stood out as a country which has mastered the necessary know-how and is well capable of sharing and transferring its expertise in all mine-action related fields, including Quality, Operations, Information Management, and Mine Risk Education. The LMAC served as an exemplary center demonstrating how LMAC has progressed with humanitarian demining and how the center is serving as an umbrella for local as well as international organizations working in Lebanon.

Due to the key role played by Lebanon, participants unanimously agreed that Lebanon should organize an Information Management workshop hosting all Arab countries in December 2013 in coordination with GICHD and similar to the workshop previously organized in September 2012.

Finally, on behalf of the Lebanese delegation, I would like to express my most heartfelt gratitude for all the cooperation and assistance already provided by donors and I look forward to working with you all in the future to ensure we reach our target of a Lebanon free from cluster munitions within the timeframe set out.

Thank you.