

# **Intervention of the Delegation of Lebanon on Clearance and Mine Risk Education**

## **CCM Inter-sessional Meeting**

**Geneva, April 15-18 2013**

Mr./Ms. Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of the Lebanese Delegation, I would like to express our appreciation to the governments of Ireland and Lao PDR for their tireless works in coordinating this matter. Allow me also to share with you a short update on Lebanon's efforts to meet its obligations under article 4 of the convention and to implement the provisions of the Vientiane Action Plan related to "Clearance and destruction of cluster munitions remnants and risk education activities".

The Vientiane Action Plan under article Action#12 calls on affected States Parties to "identify as precisely as possible locations and size of all cluster munitions contaminated areas". In this regard, I would like to inform you that the LMAC through non-technical and technical surveys identified 1,311 locations that contaminated approximately 55.6 square kilometers of land and affected over 1 million people. The types of cluster munitions found in Lebanon are M85, M77, M46, M43, M42, BLU63, and BLU26

As of March 2013, out of the 55.6 million m<sup>2</sup> cluster munitions contaminated land, two thirds of the contaminated land has been released, 449 areas (15,035,031 m<sup>2</sup>) must be cleared as these areas are affecting 145 towns (633,000 p.).

The LMAC have conducted non-technical and technical surveys, while newly emerging national actors and well established international NGOs complement the clearance work. Available assets from all operators are pooled by the LMAC and tasked to ensure the highest possible efficiency.

At present the total clearance capacity in Lebanon is 23 teams. In 2012, we have cleared 2.8 million square meters.

In Lebanon, a highly densely populated area, where contaminated land denies access to livelihoods, the vast majority of contaminated area is high and medium priority. Land release has focused primarily and firstly on clearing roads, the rehabilitation of infrastructures and

houses, to allow for the prompt return of displaced population. Focus is currently on releasing land for housing, for areas adjacent to houses and agricultural land. Uncultivated land will be tackled as a third priority. Land is released upon request from landowners and municipalities. Post clearance survey results show that land is put into use immediately after release in over 97% of tasks, where 80% was used for agriculture, 4% residential, 2% infrastructure, 1% schools, 10% pasture, 3% others.

In relation to action 11 in the Vientiane Action Plan we are happy to report that LMAC is taking all feasible measures to prevent further civilian casualties by effectively preventing unintentional civilian access to cluster munition contaminated areas. All areas with cluster bombs are mapped and maintained in LMAC database.

Concerning risk education, activities in Lebanon are evolving, from the provision of traditional awareness-raising sessions on the consequences of unexploded ordnance to more complex and targeted processes focused on behavior change. Mine risk education campaigns have been initiated all over the country since 1997. Under the coordination and close supervision of LMAC, MRE activities have reached directly over 1 million school children, farmers, and general population using appropriately targeted materials and approaches. Television broadcasts were also instrumental in conveying safety messages. On April 4<sup>th</sup> this year and to mark the international mine action awareness day, a national MRE campaign was launched, the activities ranged from awareness workshops, football match between the mine victims team and the army football team, TV shows etc.

We will do our best to fully implement our 2011-2020 National Mine Action strategy, however, the greatest need in Lebanon is greater levels of funding to allow an expansion of LMAC and other operators so that more teams can be deployed.

Finally, I would like, on behalf of the Lebanese Delegation, to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to donor countries and International organizations for their continued assistance and support to our clearance and risk reduction education programmes.

Thank you for your attention