



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

By

Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

at the Fourth Committee

on

"Assistance in mine action"

United Nations

New York

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The Ottawa Convention is a historical instrument of disarmament diplomacy combining effective multilateralism and international cooperation. It is an example of what the European Union stands for: A rules-based international order, rooted in the respect of human rights and international humanitarian law. Mine action is a critical element to achieve sustainable peace and development and to facilitate humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, effective mine action allows for the return of refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs).

The EU remains committed towards achieving a mine-free world by 2025 while also emphasising that there is a need for enhanced support to implement mine clearance, victim assistance, international cooperation and assistance and universalization efforts amongst others.

Anti-Personnel Mines, including those of an improvised nature and explosive remnants of war continue to affect the lives of millions of civilians across the world. They threaten development, peacebuilding and sustainable national capacity of the States concerned. We reaffirm our deep concern about the tremendous humanitarian and development impact, which has serious and longstanding social and economic consequences for the civilian populations of affected countries. It clearly hinders the achievement of sustainable development and inhibits peacebuilding and stabilization efforts.

Different types of mines are used by the actors to a conflict. Conflicts dynamics are changing with a proliferation of non-state armed groups and disregard of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL). Mine action is a pre-condition for reconstruction, and plays a key role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the reduction of poverty, access to education food security, and gender equality.

We reaffirm our commitment to addressing the threats of anti-personnel mines in accordance with the humanitarian principles and the realisation of the 2030 Agenda. The EU advocates for raising awareness for improvised explosive devices' (IED) threats and emphasise the need for] increased international cooperation and of victim assistance.

The EU urges all States to adopt and implement national measures to prevent the supply of weapons and explosives to unauthorised end users such as terrorists and non-State actors and call on all States that have not done so to sign and ratify the Ottawa Convention and the Oslo Convention.

* *The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

The EU and its Member States, which are among the leading donors, recognize the continued progress made through a comprehensive approach to mine action. However, the EU considers that the international community should multiply necessary synergies. We believe in, and call for reinforced collaboration between States, the UN and other relevant international organisations and institutions, the African Union and other regional organisations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and specialised NGOs. Reinforced cooperation may strengthen the efforts of the affected States in an effective and sustainable way. We support the promotion of regional and sub-regional cooperation, capacity building, information sharing and awareness raising, as well as dedicated strategies, bearing in mind the need for national ownership.

Although mines and explosive remnants of war share their indiscriminate character with IED's, the required action differs. Addressing the IED growing threat requires identification and disruption of the networks and supply chains responsible in order to stop the modus operandi and techniques. Enhanced cooperation and partnerships would improve analysis and information sharing which are key for an effective approach.

Now I would like to turn to the resolution on Assistance in Mine Action, traditionally presented by the EU Member States and facilitated by Poland.

We are deeply concerned that children continue to be extremely affected by explosive remnants of war and by the increasing threat of IEDs to civilian populations and peacekeepers in a wide range of contexts.

We recognize the contribution of mine action to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the linkages between mine action and the Agenda on Disarmament, namely as relates to the latter's part on "Disarmament That Saves Lives". We highly value the resolution on Assistance in Mine Action and its role in reaffirming the normative framework for the humanitarian mine action activities carried out by the UN system. We welcome the call for UN Member States to continue to proactively support mine action with predictable and sustainable funding in order to ensure that victim assistance requirements are met.

The resolution further addresses the concern for the impact of mines and explosive remnants of war on populations and expresses concern about the increase in casualties, in particular among children who represent almost half of all civilian casualties.

We note with appreciation the role of the Explosive Ordnance Risk Education Advisory Group, currently co-chaired by UNICEF and Humanity & Inclusion, to steer risk education efforts and to promote robust behaviour strategies to protect the populations from these threats.

We fully support the Resolution on Assistance in Mine Action, which emphasizes a need for a comprehensive approach to mine action and stresses the impact of mines and explosive remnants of war not only on access to humanitarian assistance but also on the achievement of sustainable development and peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts.

We welcome the initiative to include a gender and age-appropriate perspective and to take into account the specific needs of persons with disabilities.

We note with high appreciation, the streamlining of the resolution and the call to comply with international obligations related to mine action, such as the Ottawa Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munition as well as Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. UN Member States must remain committed in promoting respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL). Furthermore, we welcome the fact that it recognises the efforts of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action and the African Union on mine action.

We thank delegations, particularly those co-sponsoring the resolution, for their constructive engagement on the draft resolution and look forward to its adoption by consensus.

Thank you.