



Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine to the UN at the UNGA Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) on Agenda item 51 “Assistance in mine action” (November 2021)

Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of Ukraine thanks the Vietnamese Presidency for convening the SC Open debate on the issue of Mine Action which is an important element in the context of maintenance of international peace and security.

The ongoing conflicts and military activities are, regrettably, resulting in contamination of the new territories by the explosive ordnances. Moreover, the improvised explosive devices are increasingly being used by illegal armed and terrorist groups causing enormous human suffering.

Mine action remains an essential tool for enabling humanitarian response, protection of civilians and a core precondition for the stabilization and sustainable development. Ukraine pays tribute to all those involved in combating threat posed by anti-personnel landmines and unexploded ordnances around the world, in particular commends the relentless efforts by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and all relevant UN and other agencies involved in increasing security in conflict and post-conflict situations through five pillars of mine action: clearance; risk education; victim assistance; advocacy; and the stockpile destruction.

As a State Party to the Mine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons Ukraine acknowledges their fundamental character in minimizing the risks stemming from landmines and explosive remnants of war and welcomes the progress achieved to date by some countries towards fulfilling their respective international obligations.

As a result of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation and hostile actions carried out by the Russia-guided illegal armed groups operating in the certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, nowadays our country continues to deal with a drastically increased number of dangerous explosive devices, causing severe casualties among civilians, including children. Today Ukraine ranks #5 in the world by the number of civil casualties caused by mines.

Since spring 2014, around 16 thousand square kilometers in Luhansk and Donetsk regions have been contaminated with explosive devices. Anti-personnel landmines left in the Ukrainian arms depots on the occupied territories, mainly in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, are being transferred by Russia to the terrorists fighting in the east of Ukraine. 2 million Ukrainian men, women and children in the eastern parts of Ukraine face constant insecurity due to landmines

and explosive remnants. Every day millions of people risk their lives to access markets, schools, hospitals and farmlands. Landmines have also significantly curtailed people's ability to move freely across the checkpoints, where crossings occur each month.

Therefore, mine action remains one of the priorities for Ukraine.

The comprehensive humanitarian demining, however, would be possible only after the end of hostilities. Being a mines-affected state, Ukraine calls for further consolidation of the international efforts to strengthen mine action, to better assist states in overcoming the lasting consequence as well as to intensify pressure on aggressor states to end immediately any indiscriminate use of explosive devices in violation of international law.

I thank you, Mr.Chairperson.