



Statement of Lebanon

by

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Counsellor

at the

Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS

“Evaluation of the UNDP contribution to mine action”

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Check Against Delivery

*Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations
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Mr. President,

Allow me to start by joining other speakers in congratulating you on your recent election as President of the Executive Board. My delegation is confident that under your able leadership this session of the board will conclude its work in an efficient, productive and timely manner. You can count Mr. President, and members of the bureau, on my delegation's full support and active participation.

I would like to thank UNDP's Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), and welcome their report which is under consideration; I wish to also thank the Management for their Response to the Evaluation of UNDP's contribution to Mine Action.

Furthermore, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the Representative of Thailand, on behalf of the G77 and China, mainly to stress the importance of having a "long-term strategic commitment, by the UNDP, to support mine action programs, that is coherently supported both at headquarters and regional levels in order to provide both technical advice, capacity support and practical guidance to countries", and the importance of "mainstreaming its mine action programs within its other development work through respective country programs for development."

Lebanon, Mr. President, is a clear example of a once heavily contaminated country, considering its size and the density of its population. My Government remains committed to reducing the threats, to Lebanese civilians, posed by landmines, explosive remnants and cluster munitions. This will require strengthening cooperation among the Lebanese competent authorities, and their regional, and international partners.

Allow me to share with you just some of those partnerships:

- The Lebanese Armed Forces, in collaboration with UNIFIL, have cleaned approximately 4.8 square kilometers of contaminated land and destroyed more than 35,000 unexploded ordnances and mines in Southern Lebanon.
- The Lebanon Mine Action Center (LMAC) established in 1998 and supported by UNDP since 2001, in partnership with the UN Mine Action Support team in Lebanon, continues to provide a rapid response to the threat of mines.
- In 2011, the National Mine Action Strategy of 2011-2020, with the support again of UNDP, was launched, with two major goals: a country free of mines by 2020, and to fulfill Lebanon's commitments under the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions.
- From 2011 till 2013, and despite the instability, insecurity and the massive influx of Syrian refugees, the Lebanon Mine Action Center (LMAC) successfully worked on enabling affected communities to better manage risks through regular mine-risk education workshops and trainings, and through the use of information technology and social media to raise awareness; in parallel, the Ministry of Social Affairs has issued disability cards to all the victims of land-mines to guarantee the full enjoyment of their rights.

- Among the other successes is also the positioning of Lebanon as a hub of expertise that is facilitating the transfer of experience among Arabic speaking countries. An obvious example of South-South cooperation. Along those lines, and to facilitate the sustainable transfer of experience, steps have been taken by the LMAC to establish the Regional School for Humanitarian Demining in Lebanon (RSHDL). Today, the school has begun its “train the trainer” courses and has adopted a curriculum in demining operations. The school will train specialists from all around the region.
- Other new planned projects relate to Mine Risk Education and Mine Victim Assistance.

However, the final goal put forward by the strategy, aiming at the total clearance and release of agricultural and residential lands, was impeded due to a funding shortfall, the unwillingness, by Israel, to surrender the complete mine maps, and the discovery of new contaminated areas.

Mr. President,

Lebanon has gone a long way to bring the threat and impact of mines and explosive remnants of war under control, mainly due to the much-appreciated support of UNDP, UNIFIL, UNMAS, the European Union and others. In this regard, we call to increase the international support for clearance operations and for socio-economic development projects in order to enable Lebanon to meet its targets, as set by the National Mine Action Strategy, by 2020.

I thank you Mr. President.