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Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

Note verbale dated 13 April 2022 from the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva submits herewith the concluding remarks made at the international conference on “Humanitarian Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals”, held from 31 March to 1 April 2022 in Baku, Azerbaijan, which was organized by the mine action agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (ANAMA) and the United Nations Development Programme (see annex).

The Permanent Mission kindly requests the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to circulate the present note verbale and the annex thereto* as a document of the Human Rights Council under agenda item 8.

* Reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.



Annex to the note verbale dated 13 April 2022 from the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Concluding remarks of the International Conference on ‘Humanitarian Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals’ Baku, Azerbaijan (31 March – 1 April)

Summary

These conclusions and recommendations were agreed upon by the participants at the International Conference on Humanitarian Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals (Baku, Azerbaijan 31 March - 1 April 2022). The conference was attended by representatives from 37 countries. The conference Programme and List of Participants are annexed to this document as Annex 1 and Annex 2.

Preamble

1. The Participants expressed their sincere gratitude to the Government of Azerbaijan, the Mine Action Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the United Nations Development Programme for organising the conference and to all participants for their collaboration and support.
2. The aim of the Conference was to bring together key actors of the demining sector from the international community, mine action operators, government agencies and civil society to discuss the importance of humanitarian mine action in addressing the threat of mines to people's lives and livelihoods.
3. The Conference focused on exploring linkages between the potential of humanitarian mine action for lasting peace and socio-economic development and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, more specifically SDG 16th that seeks to ‘significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere’.
4. In a stimulating environment of cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary knowledge sharing best practices were exchanged on the most advanced technologies currently available worldwide as well as lessons learned from intense demining activities, which were of particular importance for Azerbaijan as it is currently undertaking major reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in its conflict-affected areas.
5. The conclusions and the recommendations of the conference will be calling upon stakeholders to strengthen cooperation and explore options for further collaboration. The establishment of a in-country donor coordination mechanism such as mine action forum was suggested and at technical level it was recommended to establish various technical working group to adress key challenges (LR, IM, EORE, VA).
6. The conference papers and summary of discussions, challenges and opportunities identified, and recommendations for further action shall be published as a compendium, providing the means by which a broad audience can updated on the development of the sector, and above all gain understanding about the importance of continuous investment into humanitarian mine action programmes.

The Participants:

- (i) Recognize that the multi-lateral and interdisciplinary approach promoted by the Conference can lead to new opportunities for peace-building, sustainable development and international cooperation on humanitarian mine action.
- (ii) Acknowledge that humanitarian mine action cannot be sustainable without partnerships at all levels.

- (iii) Recognize the need for sustainable support structures and financing, as well as the necessity of moving away from one-off project financing to built-in mechanisms to ensure timely and continuous funding for humanitarian mine action programme in Azerbaijan.
 - (iv) Recommend to consider the introduction of a new Sustainable Development Goal for humanitarian demining, to further strengthen and harness synergies between mine clearance and measurable progress towards a blueprint for a better, safer and more sustainable future for all.
 - (v) Acknowledge that humanitarian mine action is crucial for sustainable development and vital for saving lives, preventing injuries and rebuilding infrastructure, education and agriculture and underline the importance of strengthening assistance to Azerbaijan in humanitarian demining to support the ongoing reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in conflict affected areas. Explosive Ordnance Risk Education and victim assistance are important and a integrated part of any mine action programme.
 - (vi) Acknowledge that capacity-building and capacity exchange on humanitarian mine action are a continuing process, based on trust and enduring relationships that require a long-term commitment.
 - (vii) Further acknowledge that capacity-building and capacity exchange constitute a continuous dialogue between all stakeholders and awareness raising – hence recommend that this Conference is considered as a cornerstone for the continued sharing of practical experience and lessons learned in the area of humanitarian mine action, and is held annually in Azerbaijan.
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