



Speech on behalf of international mine action operators in Kabul on International Mine Action Day 2016

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3rd April 2016

Your Excellency Eng Sahib Wais Ahmad Barmak State Minister for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs, Your Excellency Dr Nasrin Oryakhail, Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Mr Mark Bowden of UNAMA, Directors of National and International Mine Action NGOs, Esteemed Diplomats, Dignitaries, Brothers and Sisters, Salaam.

It is an honour and a pleasure for me and my colleagues this morning to attend the International Mine Action Day. This is a real celebration for all Afghan People and is different from previous years; this is because the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is now leading the sector through the Ministry for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs and we have a new National Mine Action Strategy in place that has been prepared with full participation of all national and international mine action stakeholders, and endorsed by the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan came a long way since its inception; it has had outstanding achievements, achieving clearance of eighty percent of all legacy contamination; but there is more to do. Unfortunately, landmines and other Explosive Remnants of War including Pressure Plate Improvised Explosive Devices still kill and maim about 100 Afghan civilians on a monthly basis. In a war-torn country such as Afghanistan with a fragile economy this is a big human and capital loss, has severe adverse effects on economic and human resources, on food security and stability. Together we can change this and stop it once and for all. There is the political will and the equipment and trained MAPA staff to finish the job, we just need the support of the international community; so the question is - how we can make our case better and make sure that donor countries remain engaged and interested in the sector?

The answer is straightforward. Mine Action must address the needs of Afghan People and the Afghan Government band by aligning itself with the development sector, and play its role in improving community resilience, stability and security.

We would like to thank the Mine Action donor countries for their generous support of the programme for many years and we appeal for their continued support to enable the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to fulfil its obligation under Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty by 2023. We also wish to thank the Directorate of the Mine Action Coordination (DMAC), United National Mine Action Coordination Centre for Afghanistan (UNMACA) and the United Nation Mine Action Service (UNMAS) for their remarkable patience and painstaking efforts to hold the sector together. And of course our tribute goes to the hard-working deminers and field staff of all the MAPA implementing partners who are the real heroes.