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Chairman: Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 33: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (A/64/359-S/2009/470, A/64/494 and A/C.4/64/8) (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Elangovan** (India) said that peacekeeping remained at the heart of the activities of the United Nations. India had been involved from the outset; over the past five decades, it had contributed over 100,000 peacekeepers to 40 United Nations operations. It continued to provide the United Nations with thousands of soldiers and policemen, including for the most difficult operations, as well as a large proportion of operating air assets. The main challenge facing peacekeeping was the nature of the Security Council mandates: they were too broad and ambitious and bore little relation to the Organization's ability to deliver. Peacekeeping operations must have clear, achievable mandates; that would not be possible without substantively involving countries which contributed manpower and resources to peacekeeping operations.

2. It was disturbing that substantive interpretation of mandates was often left to the judgement of mission personnel on the ground, which could lead to untenable situations, particularly for military officers, who operated best with unambiguous instructions and goals. Unrealistic mandates had led to situations where personnel were forced to seek assistance from national contingents, using contingent-owned equipment in a manner that was inconsistent with the legal framework for its deployment.

3. He welcomed the emphasis placed by the Security Council on substantive and timely triangular consultations between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries. The Security Council's initiative of consulting troop- and police-contributing countries prior to mandate renewal was a step in the right direction. His delegation recognized the need for standard-setting, but believed that standards should be realistic and relevant to the operating environment in which peacekeepers were deployed and must be a blueprint for action. Greater efforts should be made to involve developing countries in generating such doctrines and standards.

4. The future effectiveness of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would depend on its ability

to develop governance capacities in affected countries. In that regard, the Security Council should meaningfully engage nations that had recently developed such capacities and had experienced successful post-colonial nation-building exercises analogous to the situation currently prevailing in areas in which the Department was deployed. Field support needed increased attention, and the Department of Field Support needed far greater internal coordination and client orientation. There was a need for increased engagement of Member States in the functioning of that Department, which should serve as a military support operation with a lean command structure.

5. **Mr. Mana** (Cameroon), reaffirming his country's commitment to the fundamental principles that should govern any peacekeeping operation, including consent of the parties, non-use of force except in legitimate self-defence, and respect for the Charter of the United Nations, stressed the need for synergy between the Security Council, the Secretariat and the General Assembly in order to increase the efficiency of peacekeeping operations, which over the previous two decades had undergone a substantial transformation and now covered the main phases of conflicts, including ceasefire monitoring, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Their high cost could discourage participation, especially in the current global economic and financial crisis. The international community must therefore redouble its efforts, especially since in regions like Africa, which was host to the bulk of peacekeeping operations, climate change and the poverty it engendered exacerbated the causes of conflict. There must, therefore, be a stronger focus on prevention. Cameroon welcomed the forthcoming establishment of a United Nations subregional office for Central Africa.

6. In response to the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the African Union and various subregions of the continent were developing programmes and projects for capacity-building and urged partners to further increase their support. On the question of training, he drew attention to a seminar for French-speaking African countries on peacekeeping operations to be held in Yaoundé in November. Aware of the importance of adequate training to meet the challenges of modern peacekeeping, Cameroon had in 2005 launched a plan for an International School for Security Forces, a subregional and continent-wide institution for the training of military, police and civilian personnel,

which could contribute greatly to strengthening African States' capabilities. The project was at the implementation stage; he thanked all States and partner organizations that had supported it and invited others to join them.

7. The African continent was particularly affected by crisis situations which posed threats to global security and could give rise to humanitarian disasters, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and widespread insecurity and political instability. The scale of piracy in the Gulf of Aden, which had an impact on all activities in vast areas of the subregion, demonstrated to the international community the risks of disengagement. Despite the high political, financial and human cost of peacekeeping operations, it was lower than the cost of inaction; he therefore endorsed the call of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) for increased support by the international community for that Mission, one of the keys to stabilization of Central Africa.

8. There was need for greater regional commitment in maintaining global peace and security, which entailed the willingness of States within regional institutions to assume their responsibilities to the full with the support of the international community and in accordance with the ideals of the Organization. He therefore encouraged support for operationalizing the crisis management mechanisms developed by the African Union and various subregional bodies. Over the past year, Cameroon had substantially increased its contribution of civilian and military personnel to United Nations and African Union peacekeeping operations and, whenever requested, had provided — and would continue to provide — logistical support for missions in neighbouring countries.

9. **Mr. Santa Cruz Arandia** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that his Government played an active part in peacekeeping operations, abiding by the fundamental precepts of consent of the parties, impartiality, non-use of force except in legitimate self-defence, respect for the rule of law, and the sovereignty of States. It contributed personnel to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), in addition to 50 military observers in various peacekeeping missions. Those joint international

endeavours were making a major contribution to establishing conditions for peace and stability, which were the prerequisites for integral, multidimensional development in the affected States.

10. The reforms proposed in the non-paper entitled "A New Partnership Agenda; Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping" should be carried out in conjunction with the troop- and police-contributing countries and aim to remedy the dearth of logistical and financial resources for strengthening the operational capacity and organizational structure of peacekeeping, especially in the field, and bolstering the administration and conduct of peacekeeping operations in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The troop- and police-contributing countries should be part and parcel of that restructuring both at Headquarters and in the field, in the interests of equitable geographical distribution.

11. He commended the Secretariat's efforts to improve personnel training, as well as the progress made in developing peacekeeping doctrine and in permanent interaction with staff on the ground. Successful fulfilment of missions required clear and appropriate guidelines, financial and logistical support, and training; certain missions needed better overall coordination. The Plurinational State of Bolivia supported United Nations action regarding zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuses, applauded the progress made in eradicating and preventing misconduct, and supported the decision to compensate and assist the victims of sexual assaults by United Nations personnel.

12. His Government was concerned at the delay in the Organization's reimbursements to troop- and police-contributing countries, which could tarnish the prestige and fulfilment of its peacekeeping operations. It hoped that the New Partnership Agenda would generate practical proposals which accorded equitable treatment to all missions.

13. Expressing his delegation's solidarity with Haiti and its support for MINUSTAH, he stressed that the Bolivian troops deployed there were fully aware of their responsibility to help achieve the goal of Haiti's full and sustainable development. In that connection, he expressed his country's sorrow at the tragic accident that had taken the lives of brave Uruguayan and Jordanian troops in the performance of their duties.

Agenda item 28: Assistance in mine action (A/64/287 and A/C.4/64/L.9)

14. **Mr. Titov** (Assistant-Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Department of Peacekeeping Operations), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on assistance in mine action (A/64/287), said that over the past two years, more than 41 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines had been destroyed, and the production, sale and transfer of anti-personnel landmines had effectively stopped. An unprecedented expanse of mined and suspect hazardous areas had been cleared, and improved risk-reduction tools and methods had contributed to a global reduction in the number of related casualties. Many States that had not acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention) were nonetheless respecting its basic principles.

15. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), which was responsible for coordinating all mine-related activities of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action, was now located within the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The United Nations, as well as Governments, civil society and operational implementing partners, had gone a long way towards ending the suffering caused by landmines and explosive remnants of war. Casualty levels from mines and explosive remnants of war had declined in a number of affected countries. Land had been cleared and returned to communities. Effective mine-risk education had been provided to at-risk populations. Survivors and their families were increasingly recognized as having rights to social and economic integration into their communities. National capacity to manage and implement complex mine action programmes had grown and was being integrated into national development plans, including the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF). The importance of advancing gender equality and the rights of persons with disabilities continued to be explicitly included in an increasing number of mine action programmes. The entire United Nations system was coordinating mine action-related activities both on the ground and at Headquarters.

16. Yet major mine action challenges remained. At the ninth meeting of States Parties to the Anti-

Personnel Mine-Ban Convention in November 2008, 15 requests to extend clearance deadlines had been discussed, showing that full implementation of the Convention remained a difficult target. In 2007-2008, mine-related casualties had occurred in several countries where none had ever been recorded. The Landmine Monitor Report 2007 had identified 5,426 casualties caused by mines, explosive remnants of war, and victim-activated improvised explosive devices; 1,401 persons had been killed and some 4,000 injured. Moreover, the goal of clearing land and transport routes to improve the livelihoods of communities was still hampered by the threat of landmines in 78 countries. Some 14 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines worldwide were yet to be destroyed.

17. The report had been informed by a series of field consultations with programmes managed by UNMAS and national programmes supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), with inputs from other members of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group.

18. The use of cluster munitions had considerable humanitarian, human rights and development consequences for civilians, both during and after armed conflict. The Secretary-General therefore urged Member States to ratify or accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and to take effective steps pursuant to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons in order to address the impact of cluster munitions; to continue to support the development of a United Nations capacity for rapid mine action deployment, most recently used in Gaza; and to acknowledge the potential role of UNMAS in providing advice and assistance to peace operations with regard to improvised explosive devices and other explosive remnants of war, a task that was all the more urgent given recent events in Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq and other areas where United Nations personnel had been seriously affected. He also called for concrete steps to ensure that mine action programmes had an equal impact on women, men, boys and girls and that they had an equal decision-making role in their communities; and for the advantages of sophisticated mechanical equipment to be exploited.

19. The progress made towards the four key strategic objectives outlined in the United Nations Inter-Agency Mine Action Strategy for 2006-2010 was described in paragraphs 39-92 of the report.

20. Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.9 demonstrated the international community's commitment and support for United Nations assistance in mine action, while acknowledging the primary responsibility of States to address the problem of landmines and explosive remnants of war and to ensure respect for the rights of the affected individuals and communities. The United Nations Mine Action Team appreciated the support afforded in the draft resolution to efforts to advance gender equality in its programmes and welcomed the recognition of the role of a wide group of multilateral, regional and national mine action programmes and entities as part of humanitarian, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development efforts. With the wealth of expertise gained, and with the sustained support of many States and others that provided the indispensable voluntary funding, the United Nations Mine Action Team was committed to a comprehensive, independent evaluation of its work; it was determined to intensify its efforts, which increasingly involved improvised explosive devices as well as abandoned, surplus or other undesired stockpiles.

21. **Mr. Örnéus** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Montenegro; and, in addition, Armenia and Republic of Moldova, said that the Second Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine-Ban Convention would afford the international community an opportunity to renew its firm commitment to a world free of anti-personnel mines and to discuss cooperation among all actors in order to enhance aid effectiveness in mine action. The European Union welcomed the progress made in universalizing and implementing the Convention since the First Review Conference in 2004.

22. However, challenges remained: many of the 39 States that were still not parties to the Convention were faced with an unstable regional situation in which stockpiled mines were being used by armed non-State actors, and every year thousands of victims, most of them civilians and children, were claimed by mines and other explosive remnants of war. Many States parties needed help in order to destroy their stockpiles, clear mined areas and release suspect areas. The most daunting challenge for many States was to live up to their responsibilities to victims in the context of broader problems of disability and human rights. Given

the significant numbers of victims, assistance to mine victims needed to be integrated into State policy frameworks.

23. Mine action remained a key priority for the European Union, as illustrated by its financial support to its member States for mine action over the years. It also organized regional seminars and facilitated technical advisory visits to States parties. The European Union stressed the importance of the integration of mine action into development policies and strategies. Cooperation between the humanitarian and development sectors needed to be strengthened through coordinated approaches at all levels. Stronger partnerships must be established between mine-affected countries, countries providing assistance, and international organizations, which all needed to work more closely together. Improved global coordination was needed among countries providing mine action assistance; furthermore, it was crucial to make use of partner countries' own systems and to enhance predictability and accountability.

24. The European Union was strongly committed to improving the international and regional responses to unregulated transfers of conventional weapons and their diversion to illicit markets and to the humanitarian consequences of mines and cluster munitions. In that connection, it advocated the adoption of a protocol to the Convention on Conventional Weapons that would involve all major military powers.

25. The European Union welcomed the recognition in draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.9 of the need to ensure that mine action programmes were gender- and age-sensitive, and the encouragement of the participation of all stakeholders in the programming of mine action.

26. **Mr. Norapoompipat** (Thailand) said that the legacy of anti-personnel mines endured long after conflicts ended, impeding social development and claiming thousands of new victims each year. During the previous decade, however, there had been steady progress in mine action by the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes involved. Through mine clearance, mine-risk education and victim-assistance programmes under the United Nations Inter-Agency Mine Action Strategy for 2006-2010, casualty rates in many former and active conflict areas had fallen to almost zero; and in many countries mine action programmes had been integrated into national

development plans. Thailand encouraged the United Nations to continue working closely with Member States in promoting mine action, with an emphasis on capacity-building and national ownership. Mine-risk education and victim assistance, including medical and rehabilitation services, were of vital importance; the United Nations must continue to help national authorities to develop victim assistance strategies.

27. Thailand's efforts in mine-risk education and victim assistance had been mainstreamed into its national development plan to ensure that victim assistance was provided in a non-discriminatory manner. A Government survey conducted in 2009 had determined that there were almost 1,300 landmine survivors in the country and that they were generally satisfied with the services provided. Since 2003, his Government had successfully disposed of all its stockpiled anti-personnel mines, and as of April 2009 it had secured 77 per cent of all mine-affected areas, which had been returned to local communities to promote local livelihoods and economic development. Moreover, Thailand was close to the goal of zero new victims of landmines as a result of its comprehensive action in mine clearance, preventive awareness, victim services, public surveys and cooperation with partners. Thailand was ready to work with any interested partner in the area of training, sharing experience and exchanging best practice in victim assistance. It was working with several NGOs and countries in its region to support technical training and mobile medical units and provide medical care to mine victims in Myanmar and Cambodia. In April 2009, Thailand and the European Commission had co-hosted the Bangkok Workshop on Achieving a Mine-Free South-East Asia attended by over 130 participants from 18 countries and many international organizations.

28. Since the majority of mine-affected countries were developing countries or even conflict-torn nations, global cooperation was essential. According to the Portfolio of Mine Action Projects, mine action initiatives would cost over \$450 million in 2009. Thailand called on international partners to provide financial assistance, operational support and technical expertise to the affected countries.

29. **Mr. Aquino** (Peru) said that mine action required the commitment of States at various levels. His Government urged all States to intensify mine clearance, risk prevention and victim assistance activities, with the support of the United Nations,

regional bodies, civil society and international cooperation.

30. At the multilateral level, Peru had been active in various bodies established under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. It was providing assistance to the more than 300 victims of mines in Peru, and as Co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance, Socio-Economic Reintegration and Mine Awareness, Peru would seek support among States parties for the treatment and rehabilitation of mine victims and their social and economic reintegration. In 2009, Peru had ratified Protocol V, on Explosive Remnants of War, to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, thus joining the efforts of the international community to promote post-conflict international humanitarian action that would reduce risks and contribute to detente, arms limitation and confidence-building among States. Peru also intended to ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

31. At the regional level, Peru, together with Ecuador, had been demining their common border, and should soon be able to declare it a mine-free zone. Significant support had been provided by the international community.

32. At the domestic level, Peru had adopted a national anti-personnel mine plan of action under which the National Police had thus far removed over 80,000 anti-personnel mines; it had also set up an assistance plan for mine victims and a pilot project to provide them with medical assistance. Law enforcement personnel were still fighting the remnants of the Shining Path guerrillas, now allied with drug traffickers; over 40 officers had lost their lives to victim-activated improvised explosive devices, clearly banned under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which were set by the guerrillas to protect illegal coca plantations.

33. **Ms. Hernández Toledano** (Cuba) said that the Cuban authorities strictly regulated the use of the mines that were part of its arsenal, in accordance with the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Amended Protocol II, and had never exported them. It further considered itself bound by the amendment to article 1 of that Convention and was observing its provisions.

34. It was a well-known fact that Cuba had for 50 years been subjected to a policy of constant hostility and aggression by the military super Power. The possession

and use of mines were part of Cuba's concept of national defence; the Cuban people were determined to defend their sovereignty and independence against constant threats, including the possibility of armed aggression. It was therefore impossible for Cuba to renounce the use of mines to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity, in exercise of the right of legitimate self-defence recognized by the Charter of the United Nations.

35. Cuba had contributed to humanitarian efforts to prevent or mitigate the effects of the indiscriminate use of mines by sending hundreds of its doctors to help with rehabilitation in all parts of the world, particularly in Africa, Asia and Central America. It believed that international cooperation should extend not only to mine removal but also to victim assistance. Timely resource mobilization was very important in that regard. The countries which had laid the mines in the territory of other States had the legal and political responsibility to help with mine removal and victim assistance. The United Nations had a duty to help States develop the capability to perform such activities, especially in developing countries, as part of the Organization's overall development strategy.

36. The draft resolution on assistance in mine action addressed the humanitarian dimension of mine use, without prejudice to the legitimate interests of States in respect of disarmament and national security. That balance must be preserved. Future resolutions should continue to focus on the humanitarian dimension and assistance to affected countries; other aspects of the question were the responsibility of other United Nations bodies, such as the First Committee. Cuba would continue to support all efforts to eliminate the terrible effects of indiscriminate and irresponsible mine use.

37. **Mr. Maalool** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that mines and explosive remnants of the Second World War had caused great suffering, loss of life and damage to property in his country, even though it had not been a party to the conflict, and the development process had been hindered. His Government had established a costly national mine clearance programme covering over 400 square kilometres. Although the absence of maps showing where mines had been laid and the difficulty of identifying the remnants of war had prevented the full clearance of the mines, the efforts made had significantly reduced the numbers of casualties.

38. The countries that had laid the mines must accept their moral responsibility and cooperate with all the

affected countries by providing material and technical support and paying appropriate compensation to families. In that connection, his delegation was grateful to the Italian Government for taking the bold step of apologizing officially to the Libyan people for the colonial period and offering compensation to mine victims as well as medical expertise in the area of artificial limbs. His delegation urged other States concerned to draw a line under colonialism. His Government had begun to assist the High Commission for National Demining in Chad in the clearance of mines in that country.

39. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's report (A/64/287) but emphasized its position that the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention had ignored the direct responsibility of the States that had laid mines in the territory of other countries. Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons should be reviewed and amended to include the effects of the explosive remnants of war and the responsibility of the States that had produced such remnants.

40. The report also addressed the use of certain types of mines by non-State armed groups. In that connection he urged the United Nations to devise a strict system for monitoring to prevent the access of such groups to mines.

41. **Ms. Le Minh Thoa** (Viet Nam) said that the lasting social and economic consequences of mines and explosive remnants of war were the concern of affected countries and the international community. The United Nations had played an important role in mine-clearance efforts and mine victim assistance. The United Nations Mine Action Team should, in developing its 2011-2015 Strategy, consider the new priorities and benchmarks recommended in section IV of the Secretary-General's report.

42. Her Government had adopted a series of policies, guidelines and mechanisms for mine-clearance and victim assistance. As a country that had endured decades of war and suffered huge damage from explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, Viet Nam shared the international concerns over the devastating effects they caused to innocent civilians. It was anticipated that the process of identifying and assessing contaminated areas and clearing and destroying mines could take a very long time in her country owing to budgetary and human resource constraints. Large-scale collection and

clearance operations by both Government agencies and local communities had freed up land for the safe return of the population, but Viet Nam's experience pointed up the importance of international cooperation and assistance to both Governments and victims. Her Government hoped to continue to receive such assistance.

43. **Mr. Ashiki** (Japan) said that the Second Review Conference would give States parties an opportunity to review achievements, identify future challenges and at the same time renew their individual and collective commitments to mine action. The number of signatory countries to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, among them Japan, had steadily grown since it had been opened for signature. Both Conventions addressed the humanitarian and development concerns resulting from landmines and unexploded ordnance.

44. Japan had been active in helping affected countries, having since 1998 given \$380 million to 40 countries in different regions. Thanks to Japan's research and development with respect to demining machines, Japanese technology was now employed all over the world, particularly in Central America and the Middle East. Japan was open to further requests for assistance in that regard.

45. Another demanding area was victim assistance. Because of its abiding concern for human security, Japan had increased its assistance to victims of landmines: in Colombia, the country with the largest number of victims, it had a five-year project under way to reinforce the medical rehabilitation system for persons with disabilities and to improve the access of mine victims to services. In Lebanon, Japan was providing about \$3 million for economic recovery in areas affected by cluster munitions.

46. His Government would continue to help consolidate peace and socio-economic development in post-conflict countries through bilateral support, including the provision of machines and the dispatch of experts, in partnership with the United Nations and NGOs. Its assistance took into consideration the need to strengthen ownership in the countries concerned.

47. **Mr. Desta** (Eritrea) said that his delegation welcomed the progress made in mine clearance and victim assistance as his country was one of those hardest hit by the effects of landmines and unexploded ordnance. Those silent killers posed not only a security but also a humanitarian threat to millions in many

conflict zones. Action must be taken to ensure the return of normalcy to the lives of Eritrea's people and the people of the region.

48. Mine clearance was not only a confidence-building measure but also an essential element in long-term recovery and development; his Government had thus made it one of its highest national priorities. The Eritrean Demining Authority was in charge of mine clearance, facilitating the return of internally displaced persons, ensuring the safe use of land and conducting other development activities. As a legacy of the 30-year war for independence and the recent border conflict with Ethiopia, one-tenth of Eritrea's communities were still affected by mines, which impacted over 650,000 people. Despite the limited external assistance it was receiving his Government was using its own meagre resources to expedite the mine-clearing programme. Since 2001, it had cleared over 11,000 mines, almost 70,000 unexploded munitions and almost 55 million square metres of land. Much land, however, was still contaminated, and survivors and communities needed more assistance. His Government had given attention also to the education and training of all involved, from the mine experts themselves to ordinary people living in mine-infested areas. It was fully aware of the need for mine victims to be a part of the decision-making process and to have access to opportunities for development.

49. His Government expressed appreciation for the mine-risk education project funded by UNICEF and the funding of two mine-clearance teams by UNDP and hoped for continued support in that regard. It was fully convinced that the struggle for the total elimination of landmines and unexploded ordnance must be waged at the national, regional and international levels, in a coordinated manner, to achieve tangible results.

50. **Mr. Jiang Yingfeng** (China) said that his Government attached great importance to the humanitarian concerns raised by landmines and supported the relevant international legal instruments. It faithfully fulfilled its obligations under Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and was a member of the group of governmental experts established under the Protocol. China also appreciated the humanitarian spirit of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and endorsed its objectives, it maintained communications and exchanges with States parties to the Convention and had also established contacts and exchanges with many

non-governmental organizations in the field of international mine action.

51. China believed that it was important to strengthen assistance to the many countries and regions where landmines posed a serious threat to life and property and hindered economic development and social rehabilitation. Cooperation on international mine action should be based on three principles: providing demining assistance that was appropriate to the specific conditions and real needs of the recipients; enhancing capacity-building in mine-affected countries so that they could ultimately depend on themselves instead of on external assistance; and exploring new approaches to international cooperation on mine action so that its effectiveness would be ensured.

52. As a former mine-affected country, China fully understood the problems and had since 1998 been operating a long-term, systematic international demining programme that had provided assistance to more than 20 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America in the form of financing, equipment and training. In 2008 and 2009, China had held training courses for personnel from Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq and the Sudan and donated demining equipment to those countries. China noted with great concern the landmine challenge faced by Sri Lanka, which jeopardized its resettlement of its internally displaced persons and the rehabilitation of the country, and would provide demining assistance to Sri Lanka as soon as possible. Experience had shown that Chinese demining techniques were safe and reliable and its demining equipment cost-effective and efficient. China would continue to cooperate closely with all parties and contribute to resolving the humanitarian concerns caused by landmines.

53. **Ms. Blum** (Colombia) said that since her Government's ratification of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in 2001, it had made tangible progress in implementing the Convention. The use of anti-personnel mines had been permanently suspended; Colombia's entire stockpile of mines had been destroyed in October 2004; and 12 of the 34 minefields under the control of the armed forces had been cleaned up, with the remainder expected to be done by 2011.

54. The establishment of a high-level presidential programme to coordinate and supervise the activities of the Government agencies responsible for implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention had allowed

the development of a comprehensive strategy, including intensive prevention and assistance to victims. In the affected communities, productive land was being recovered, the inhabitants were being resettled, and the public service network reconstructed, and the rehabilitation of victims was allowing them full social and economic reintegration.

55. The Second Review Conference that Colombia would be hosting at Cartagena at the end of November would be an opportunity for Governments, international organizations and civil society to work to strengthen the Convention and respond to the needs of all the victims from different regions of the world whose basic rights and lives had been harmed by mines. The hundreds of new victims each year and the great expanses of land that were still contaminated testified to the gravity of the problem. The plan of action adopted at the Review Conference, building on the Nairobi Plan of Action adopted five years earlier, would reflect new realities and the emerging needs and should decisively address the new challenges.

56. One of the challenges to the Convention was the use of anti-personnel mines by armed non-State actors, who had found new ways of producing them and were using them systematically and indiscriminately. The Second Review Conference would provide an opportunity for condemnation of the use of anti-personnel mines by anyone, but in particular non-State actors, and for the assessment of past action and new options. International cooperation was a central component of mine action, and even at a time of financial crisis, the affected countries must be able to count on adequate technical and financial assistance. The Second Review Conference must take decisive action to help victims and their communities and ensure the full incorporation of the humanitarian and human rights dimension.

57. **Mr. Badji** (Senegal) underscored the heavy human, and economic cost of mines, which caused severe injuries and death, destabilized the economies of many countries and permanently undermined security, jeopardizing the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. As usual, Africa was the continent with the greatest number of affected States.

58. All mine action must be conducted in the context of the four-pronged approach of the United Nations Inter-Agency Mine Action Strategy for 2006-2010. As the Strategy drew to a close, the focus must be on the

plan of action that would shortly be adopted at the Second Review Conference, which should take the broader view of consolidation of peace in the affected countries and the rebuilding of their social and economic foundations.

59. The viability of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention depended on the political will of the States parties to comply with the required confidence-building, transparency and control measures by enacting implementing legislation and submitting periodic reports, which would require more intensive international cooperation. Senegal called on the international community to provide financial and technical assistance to the affected countries so that they could forge a national capability to clean up mined areas and actively provide for the needs of victims. The implementation of the Convention had highlighted the interconnectedness of the social, economic, health and development components of mine action, and led to the stigmatization of the sizeable minority of States that refused to repudiate military and trade practices that were totally unacceptable. Like all States parties, Senegal had a 10-year deadline for removing and destroying all mines in its territory, but since it had not yet completed the decontamination of the mine areas, it had been given seven more years. With that in mind, the Government had adopted a national mine action strategy for 2007-2015 and mine action guidelines.

60. **Mr Schulz** (Observer, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)), said that the Federation had been providing humanitarian services to the victims of anti-personnel mines even before the adoption of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Its global network of national societies, professional staff and trained volunteers reached all affected countries and communities, where they provided mine-awareness training, mine-risk education and risk reduction, first aid, medical treatment, psychological support and socio-economic help for the families of victims. The Federation had the highest esteem for those who, at high personal risk, worked physically on clearing mines. It was slow work because too many areas of the world had been infested by too many mines, so that individual tragedies were still waiting to happen. Assisting mine victims was a long-term process that required long-term funding; it was to be hoped that donors would continue to contribute generously.

61. Only prevention would solve the mine problem, and only a global solution would do. Yet 39 States were still not parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention; there was a moral imperative to achieve universality in the nearest possible future. Cluster munitions were just as devastating to human lives as mines, but 95 States had as yet failed to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

62. **Mr. Titov** (Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Department of Peacekeeping Operations), thanking the Committee for its constructive discussion of the key issues, observed that the most urgent challenges were to address the protection of United Nations personnel and property from improvised explosive devices, and to continue to destroy munitions left behind in post-conflict situations. In addition to financial aid, the United Nations Mine Action Team would welcome other assistance from Member States, whether in the form of personnel, advice, lessons learned, studies, technical research and technology sharing, training or humanitarian support. Establishing a firm foundation for mine action required the participation of all — Governments, the United Nations Mine Action Team, United Nations and non-governmental humanitarian and development agencies, local communities, NGOs, peacekeeping operations, donors and individuals.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.