

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 19 March 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of April 2021, Viet Nam intends to organize an open debate on the theme “Mine action and sustaining peace: stronger partnerships for better delivery”, under the agenda item “Maintenance of international peace and security”, on Thursday, 8 April 2021, at 8 a.m.

In order to guide the discussions on the topic, Viet Nam has prepared and attaches herewith a concept note (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Dang Dinh Quy**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 19 March 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council open debate on the theme “Mine action and sustaining peace: stronger partnerships for better delivery”, to be held on 8 April 2021

Objectives

- Identify new threats and challenges posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, as well as various aspects of the consequences caused by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices.
- Put forth further measures and actions that would contribute to mine action and help address various issues on the agenda of the Security Council in a more comprehensive, tailored manner, in connection with various aspects of the work of the Council, including conflict settlement, post-conflict reconstruction, peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts.
- Share challenges, lessons learned and best practices from mine-affected and donor countries, United Nations subsidiary bodies, other international organizations and individuals.
- Reaffirm the commitment of the Security Council to mine action, especially in addressing mine action challenges; provide strong support to various States, the entire United Nations system, especially members of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, and other relevant humanitarian actors in their sustained efforts in that area.
- Propose concrete measures for better coordination and tailored international mine action support, at the national, regional and international levels, to meet the needs of affected communities and countries.

Background

1. The continued threats posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices to human lives, security and humanitarian efforts, which are ever present and long-term, remain serious and overlooked as compared with other issues on the agenda of the Security Council. They still affect about 60 countries and territories in conflict or post-conflict situations. They injure, maim or affect the lives of the civilian population, hinder the activities and threaten the lives of personnel participating in humanitarian, peacekeeping and clearance programmes and operations, undermine the peace, security and stability of States, and impede sustainable socioeconomic development. Vulnerable groups are among those suffering most from landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, with effects felt by many generations after conflicts.

2. Mine action is therefore critical to the peace and security agenda, humanitarian emergency response and sustainable development, and positively contributes to stabilization and sustaining peace, as reaffirmed in Security Council resolution [2365 \(2017\)](#) and the report of the Secretary-General on a comprehensive approach to mine action ([S/2018/623](#)). While Member States bear the primary responsibility, the United Nations system, including the Security Council, as well as regional organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders, all have significant roles to play in mine action. Through intensive global efforts, cooperation and support

from international development partners, progress has been made in addressing the threats posed by explosive ordnance.

3. However, national and international mine action efforts are still faced with enormous challenges, whether from the diverse complexities of new intense, protracted and urbanized conflicts, or increased threats from improvised explosive devices. The year 2019 was the fifth year in a row with high numbers of recorded casualties owing to the indiscriminate use of landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices. The vast majority of recorded casualties were civilians (80 per cent), of whom 43 per cent were children. Moreover, landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices have also been significant contributors to fatalities among peacekeepers. For example, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali has recorded more than 350 casualties since its creation in 2013, of whom 65 were killed as a result of attacks using explosives, which have increasingly included improvised explosive devices.¹ Weak surveillance and data management systems, vast and remote contamination areas, a significant number of victims and inadequate services to meet their needs, as well as funding shortfalls, are other mounting obstacles. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic only adds more burdens to and further stretches resources allocated to mine action and threatens to disrupt or blunt ongoing projects, especially those that require local access or in-person contacts and mine clearance, mine risk education and victim assistance activities. In that context, the need for further partnership, more enhanced regional and international cooperation, and greater inter-agency coherence within the United Nations system on mine action becomes more urgent.

4. The Secretary-General, in his report on a comprehensive approach to mine action, highlighted a number of areas that would benefit from the enhanced role of and actions taken by international actors, including the Security Council. The Secretary-General emphasized several enabling factors that would be essential for the achievement of results in mine action, including the responsibility of parties to conflict to mitigate the risk posed by explosive devices to civilians; the inclusion of mine action in ceasefires and peace agreements, where appropriate; the mainstreaming of mine action into relevant country-specific discussions and the planning and mandates of United Nations responses; well-preparedness of peacekeepers in their deployments by increasing risk awareness, improving training and building the capacity of uniformed personnel to mitigate explosive threats; enhancement of national mine action management; assistance of the United Nations as well as of Member States; and sustainable and predictable contributions to the voluntary trust fund for assistance in mine action. Furthermore, the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2019–2023 mentions continued engagement and leadership by States; enhanced political support from Member States and regional organizations; sustained and predictable international and national financial support; effective integration of mine action in country-level United Nations strategic and coordination frameworks; improved integrated management of data, information and analyses among United Nations entities; continued close coordination and collaboration with regional organizations and arrangements, NGOs and other stakeholders; strengthening of the substantive and technical skills of United Nations staff; and access to affected areas and communities. To better cope with existing and emerging challenges, the need for further partnership, more enhanced regional and

¹ It was noted in the report of the Secretary-General on a comprehensive approach to mine action (S/2018/623) that, in 2017, there were 59 deaths and 150 injuries among United Nations peacekeeping personnel as a result of malicious acts involving the use of explosive devices.

international cooperation, and greater inter-agency coherence within the United Nations system, including the Security Council, on mine action becomes more urgent.

5. In its resolution [2365 \(2017\)](#), the Security Council, which bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, stressed the importance of mine action activities in protecting civilians and peacekeepers, increasing the threat mitigation capacity of peacekeeping operations, enhancing mandate planning and delivery, strengthening national capacities and promoting effective partnerships. However, as mentioned above, there have been new threats and challenges posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices to civilians, peacekeepers, humanitarian personnel and mine action personnel. It is high time to strengthen the role of the Security Council in mine action as well as to discuss further concrete actions in addressing mine-related issues in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Guiding questions

1. What are the key achievements and challenges in mine action to mitigate the threat to civilians, personnel participating in law enforcement, humanitarian, peacekeeping, rehabilitation and clearance programmes and operations from landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices?
2. What are the obstacles in addressing mine action at the global, regional and national levels? What are the most pressing needs of mine-affected States/regions in dealing with these problems? How we can address them?
3. How can cohesion and coordination be enhanced within the United Nations system and between the United Nations and Member States, regional organizations, NGOs and other stakeholders, in improving the effectiveness of mine action activities and tailoring international mine action support? Given the current funding shortfalls and the impact of COVID-19, what can be done to achieve more sustained and predictable international and national support for mine action?
4. How can the Security Council better employ its existing tools and mechanisms to address the threats from explosive ordnance in carrying out its mandates? What more can be done by the Council to contribute better to United Nations and global mine action efforts?

Briefers

- António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations (to be confirmed).
- Daniel Craig, United Nations Global Advocate for the Elimination of Mines and Explosive Hazards/Michelle Yeoh, United Nations Development Programme Goodwill Ambassador (to be confirmed).
- Ambassador Stefano Toscano, Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (to be confirmed).
- Nguyen Thi Dieu Linh, Provincial Programme Manager and Manager of Project Renew (all-women demining team), Norwegian People's Aid Viet Nam.

Format

The open debate will be convened at the ministerial level on 8 April 2021, in a virtual format.

Member States and observers wishing to participate are invited to submit a written statement to the Security Council Affairs Division (dppa-scsb3@un.org). Statements sent by 8 April 2021 will be included in a compilation document.