BACKGROUND NOTE
Plenary Session IV. Thinking Safety and Acting Safely in the Digital Age

Date and time: 11:45-13:00 – Thursday 13 February 2020

Chair: Ms. Meritxell Relaño, Director, Office of Emergency Operations, Geneva, UNICEF

Speakers:

Mr. Khalid Rashad Jabbar, Director General, Directorate for Mine Action, Iraq
Mr. Reuben McCarthy, Regional Manager on Weapon Contamination for the Near and Middle East, ICRC
Mr. Abel Tesfai, Mine Action Officer, United Nations Office to the African Union
Ms. Sylvie Bouko, Consultant, GICHD
Mr. Danee Luhar, Child Protection Specialist, Myanmar, UNICEF
Mr. Solomon H. Black, Programme Manager, U.S. Department of State
Ms. Annemarie Swai, Regional Emergency Advisor, Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, UNICEF
Mr. Ivan Martinić, inventor of the minefields.info app, Croatia

Location: Room XVIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

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Introduction

The Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) sector is dominated by traditional delivery approaches such as dissemination of printed materials, radio campaigns, in-school lessons or other face-to-face sessions. At the same time, in 2020, there are millions of people at risk who have not yet received risk education at all, and many other communities who have not received enough quality risk education, from Gaziantep to Mosul, from Lake Chad to Aden, or from Rakhine State to Kandahar. Most of these people, including youth, nonetheless increasingly have access to some form of digital messaging or digital interaction, be it through text messages, mobile applications, web pages, social media, or other technology platforms.

In fact, 95 per cent of the world population has access to 3G mobile technology. In Lebanon, for example, 84 per cent of refugee households use WhatsApp. This shows how imperative it is that mine action evolves along with the fast-changing world around it; the need for new and innovative solutions that harness technology is urgent.

Purpose of the Session

As we enter the implementation phase of the Oslo Action Plan and the world has just over a decade left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals; as we have to deal with a caseload that is almost twice as high as in 2013 in terms of new casualties; we urgently need to rethink the way we deliver risk education to millions of people who are at risk or potentially at risk.

If we want to make a real difference, it is crucial to invest now in innovative risk education approaches, including through more systematic use of digital engagement, to drastically improve the cost-effectiveness of risk education programming.

This session will take stock of initiatives in the sector that use technology and digital engagement[1] to improve coverage, quality, integration and equity, as well as to enhance the cost-effectiveness of explosive ordnance risk education campaigns. It will, in particular, explore the promising growth potential of these new technologies in a context where millions of at-risk people, including displaced girls, women, boys and men, have the right to receive quality risk education.

Format for the Plenary: (75 minutes)

Introductory remarks by Chair	10 minutes
Presentation by DMA Iraq, Virtual Reality in Mine Action in Iraq	05 minutes
Presentation by ICRC, Digital Communication in Weapons Contamination Programmes	05 minutes
Presentation by UNOAU/UNMAS, Risk Education Talking Device in Darfur	05 minutes
Presentation by GICHD, Review of New Technologies and Methodologies for EORE in Challenging Contexts	05 minutes
Presentation by UNICEF, Interactive Mobile App for EORE in Myanmar	05 minutes
Presentation by U.S. Department of State on Facebook Ads Pilot Project in Iraq	05 minutes
Presentation by UNICEF, Digital campaign and Virtual Reality in Ukraine	05 minutes
Presentation by the inventor of the minefields.info app, Croatia	05 minutes
Discussion and Q & A	15 minutes
Closing remarks by the Chair	05 minutes

Food for Thought:

Through digital engagement, we have formidable potential to improve coverage, quality, equity and cost-effectiveness of risk education campaigns.

- What stage are we at now?
- What are the most promising technologies?
- What are the lessons learned from digital risk education initiatives?
- How can we scale up 'what works'?
- What are the bottlenecks and challenges?
- Who should be our key partners outside of mine action sectors?

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[1] Including: use of mobile technologies (e.g. mobile EORE Apps, platforms such as the U-report (a messaging tool that empowers young people around the world to engage with and speak out on issues that matter to them), videos and webinars, etc.), use of social media including Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc.; use of virtual reality; use of technology for remote M&E or remote EORE courses; use of other technologies such as the risk education talking device (RETD) developed in Darfur, etc.