**BACKGROUND NOTE**

**Plenary Session 6: “A Safer Tomorrow for Children”**

Date and time: 10:00 to 11:15, Friday 8 February 2019

Chair: **Ambassador Hans Brattskar**, Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations in Geneva

Speakers: **Ms. Christelle Loupforest**, Global Coordinator, Mine Action Area of Responsibility

 **Mr. Michael Copland**, Global Coordinator, Child Protection Area of Responsibility

 **Mr. Velayuthan Sivagnanasothy**, Secretary, Ministry of Resettlement, Rehabilitation, Northern Development and Hindu Religious Affairs, and Secretary, Presidential Task Force on Northern and Eastern Provinces Development, Government of Sri Lanka

 **Mr. Abraham Achiek**, Child Protection Specialist**,** UNICEF Yemen

Location: Room XVIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

**Introduction**

Child casualties of explosive ordnance have been increasing in recent years. The Landmine Monitor has recorded at least 2,452 children casualties in 2017, the highest annual total since 2013.[[1]](#footnote-1) For most survivors, this means living with a disability for the rest of their life. The lives of their parents and siblings are also changed forever. In 2018, the Child Protection and Mine Action Areas of Responsibility of the Global Protection Cluster decided to strengthen their collaboration with a view to reducing the number of children who have an accident with an explosive ordnance, increasing the survival rate, and facilitating access to rehabilitation, psycho-social support and education for child survivors and their caretakers. Doing so requires improving the impact and reach of risk education and victim assistance to children, and the implementation of policy to improve medical care and health services.

**Purpose of the Session**

The purpose of this session is to identify ways to reduce the risk of child casualties of explosive ordnances. The plenary session will highlight the importance of collaboration between mine action and child protection, and ways in which victim assistance and mine risk education have addressed the needs of children in conflict and post-conflict settings. The panellists will address:

1. The criticality of mine risk education and victim assistance to children. The Child Protection Area of Responsibility will share best practices and knowledge applicable to mine action.
2. The Injury Surveillance System used in Sri Lanka to prioritize mine risk education, clearance and victim assistance to communities and regions where they are most needed.
3. Empowerment of local communities to play a key role in coordinating victim assistance and in implementing alternative risk reduction strategies.
4. Initiatives to protect children from explosive ordnance in Yemen.

**Format for the Plenary: (75 minutes)**

Introductory remarks by the Chair, H.E. Hans Brattskar 10 minutes

Presentation by Ms. Christelle Loupforest 8 minutes

Presentation by Mr. Michael Copland 7 minutes

Presentation by Mr. Velayuthan Sivagnanasothy 15 minutes

Presentation by Mr. Abraham Achiek 15 minutes

Discussion and Q & A 15 minutes

Closing remarks by the co-Chairs 5 minutes

**Food for Thought:**

* Are children more at risk than adults?
* What type of information do children have access to? Are they not aware, misinformed, or forced into behaviours that put them more at risk? How best can we address this?
* What are some lessons learned from the Child Protection Area of Responsibility that can be transferred to mine action?
* What has UNICEF learnt from providing safe spaces to children in emergencies?
* What lessons from the injury surveillance system in Sri Lanka can be applied globally?
* What has been the benefit of empowering local communities in victim assistance?
* What have been the challenges of coordinating between mine action and child protection actors?
1. International Campaign to Ban Landmines; 2018 Landmine Monitor Report, November 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)