



**Statement delivered by Ambassador Trishala Persaud, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana to the United Nations during the Arria-formula Meeting “Safeguarding Lives, Sustaining Peace: Enhancing Mine Action for Stabilization, Protection, Recovery, and Inclusion”**

**12 December 2024**

**Trusteeship Council**

**Thank you, Chair**

I thank Ambassador Keo Chhea and Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for their informative briefings. I also take this opportunity to commend Cambodia on its successes with mine action.

Guyana thanks Japan for convening this Arria-formula Meeting which presents another opportunity to underscore the urgency of addressing the devastating impacts of landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices on communities worldwide.

## **Chair,**

Guyana agrees with the assertion that mine action is not merely a technical endeavour but a human and humanitarian imperative that deeply affects the safety, security and well-being of individuals and communities. We have seen repeatedly how the presence of landmines and unexploded ordnance disrupts lives, leads to tragic casualties, devastating injuries, permanent disabilities and hampers development and recovery efforts. It is a critical barrier to the realization of fundamental human rights and dignity, particularly for vulnerable populations, including children and the elderly. In this context, action to address the dangers posed by these weapons is important.

In this regard, I highlight the following three points:

**First**, a collaborative approach between and among Member States, the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations Secretariat is critical to ensure that mine action is integrated right from the infancy stages of planning peace operations, all the way through to post-recovery plans. In this context, we underline the importance of a comprehensive approach to mine action encompassing assessment of mine threats, clearance operations, risk education, victim assistance, and policy frameworks promoting inclusion and resilience.

Enhancing mine action is more than just removing threats; it is about restoring hope and enabling communities to reclaim their lands and livelihoods. We urge the international community, including the relevant UN agencies, to bolster support for affected countries through technical and financial inputs, ensuring they have the resources to implement effective mine action programmes.

**Second,** women must be integrated into mine action efforts. They can be vital agents of change in recovery and risk education initiatives. Policies and programmes must foster an inclusive environment that empowers women and promotes their participation in mine action strategies. Guyana has consistently advocated for women to be fully engaged in all aspects of peacebuilding. Critical to this is ensuring that women are recruited and are beneficiaries of capacity-building programmes. This should also be extended to women being specifically trained for careers in mine action. On this note, we recall that during the Council's visit to Colombia in February this year, the heavy involvement of women in the country's demining programme was observed. We commend Colombia for this and encourage more countries with demining programmes to involve more women.

**Third**, children are particularly vulnerable and gravely affected by landmine incidents and require the necessary medical and psycho-social support. Mine risk education is crucial to ensure that children are taught how to recognize and avoid mines, thereby saving more young lives. For child survivors, counselling and mental health services are crucial to helping them recover from the trauma experienced as a result of mines. Additionally, rehabilitation services are necessary to help children recover from injuries suffered during mine explosions.

**Chair,**

Guyana stands in solidarity with all nations striving to address the challenges of landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices. We call for strengthened partnerships among Member States, international organizations, and civil society to enhance coordination, share best practices, and mobilize resources for mine action initiatives.

We also call on all parties to conflict to prioritise the protection and safety of civilians, in accordance with their obligations under IHL, and to cease the use of these indiscriminate weapons.

As we strive to build a more peaceful and secure world, let us prioritize mine action not only as a means of harm reduction, but as a cornerstone of sustainable development, resilience, and social stability.

**I thank you.**