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Statement

by

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Minister of State with the Responsibility for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

**Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Mine Action and Sustaining
Peace**

Security Council

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Thank you Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you, Honourable Minister for assuming your new position and commending the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for convening this timely and important discussion. We also thank the briefers for leading this fruitful exchange.

Landmines, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and other explosive remnants of war are deadly scourges that threaten far too many lives and livelihoods, while undermining the long-term stability, security, and development of countries. Coordinated action is needed, by all parties, to address the risks posed to civilian populations, to humanitarian workers, to peacekeeping personnel, and to the institutions and infrastructure necessary for viable states.

At a time when the cross-border challenges of terrorism, organised crime, health crises, and climate change bear disproportionately on vulnerable states and regions, there is an urgent need for the peace and security, humanitarian, and development considerations of mine action to be taken fully into account. Mine action runs across this "triple nexus" by:

- Facilitating freedom of movement to security actors, including peacekeeping personnel; and supporting effective mandate delivery;
- Streamlining the delivery of humanitarian assistance and allowing safe and voluntary returns of refugees and displaced persons;

- Facilitating socioeconomic activities, including agriculture, in areas recovered from landmines; and, enabling communities affected by explosive ordnance to fully participate in these activities. This integration is essential for peacebuilding.

Mine action serves as a vehicle for promoting effective civil-military cooperation in many theatres of operation. As has been the case in Colombia, mine action can provide critical support to peace processes and deliver rapid peace dividends as the threat of explosive ordnance is removed from the lives of individuals and communities, paving the way for post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines commends the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) for its leading role in providing technical and financial assistance to affected countries in areas such as mine risk education, victim assistance, weapons and ammunition management, and survey and clearance operations. We also hail the support offered to various peacekeeping missions to ensure that they are well-equipped with the necessary expertise and resources to detect, mitigate, and counter these threats.

In all circumstances, these capacities should be transferred to host countries to strengthen national ownership over explosive ordnance. Countries from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa and across the Middle East will benefit immensely when national institutions are able to assume full responsibility for mine action.

Core competencies in areas such as ammunition stockpile management and explosive ordnance disposal should be

incorporated into Security Sector Reform (SSR) programmes, and modern technologies that enhance explosive ordnance awareness and facilitate route clearance should be transferred to affected states.

All states and the regional and sub-regional organisations within which they are situated must work together, diligently, to improve transparency and accountability across supply lines to manage the traceability of explosive ordnance, and to minimise their illegal transfer across porous borders. Our delegation also emphasises the importance of information-sharing at the regional and international levels to dismantle complex networks of terrorism and transnational organised crime that facilitate illicit cross-border flows of explosive ordnance. In this regard, we hail the crucial roles of INTERPOL, the UNODC, and the World Customs Organization's Global Shield Programme in mitigating these threats.

Mr. President,

The 21st century is perforated with many emergent and unexpected challenges that threaten our multilateral system. As we grapple with the residual risks of land mines and other deadly remnants of war, let us renew our commitment to uphold the principles of international law; and strengthen the sovereign authorities of states upon which our collective security is built.

I Thank You.