

Mr. President,

Excellencies

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Ethiopia remains committed to the realization of the noble objective of universal and global banning of anti-personnel landmine with the view to making our world free of mines. We believe in the principle of international humanitarian law that civilian population require protection against the effects of indiscriminate use of all types of mines while states are permitted to use them in a responsible manner to address their legitimate national security concerns. It is on the basis of this universally shaped vision and principles that Ethiopia has become a signatory state to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) and has obtained significant achievements through its Mine Action Office over the years. These include:

- (i) establishment of nationwide baseline data covering all impacted communities (2001-2004);
- (ii) clearance of more than 59.6 sq. ^{km} ~~mi~~ area and handing it over to communities of 366,000 people for productive use;
- (iii) destruction of 9,260 Anti-personal mines, 1,466 Anti-tank mines and 197,985 Unexploded Ordinance (UXO);

Mr. President,

Through these achievements, we have succeeded to declare and release safe lands, sensitize mine affected community members and enhance our technical capacity. The sectors that have benefited most from demining include in particular: Agriculture, water, Education, Health, Housing and Energy. Yet, our demining efforts need to address Suspected Hazard Areas. As a result, Ethiopian government decided to transfer the responsibility of the mine Action Office to the Ministry of National Defence, although process of transfer has taken more time than expected. However, the assigned Combat Engineers Division of the Ministry of National Defence in the last two-and -half -year has accomplished besides reorganizing the Office the following tasks:

- 140 personnel selected from 4 companies were trained in the basic humanitarian demines training, the content of which included: EOD regarding Explosives and Remnants of War, Battle Area Clearance, Techniques of casualty evacuation (Casavac) and First Aid;
- Parallel to this capacity building activities the Rapid Response Team (RRT) visited more than 10 reported communities in the 4 regions of Amhara, Oromiya, South and Somalia regional states. As a result, they checked and cleared more than 100,000 sq. mt. and destroyed 10 APM and 176,000 unexploded ordinances.

Mr. President,

Due to the difficulties referred to above, coupled with the shortage and obsolete condition of operational equipments and lack of adequate funding of the planned programmes, we have not been able to submit our national report in keeping with article 5 of the Convention. That is why we requested five year extension period (01 June to 31 May 2020) in order to comply obligations to clear the remaining remote areas from all sorts of mines bound by the Convention.

In order to fully accomplish tasks envisaged in the requested five-year extension period, it is indispensable to obtain support of (a) international advisors; (b) training and capacity building for demining teams, RRT, EOD teams and (c) fully equip RRT and EOD Teams and (d) in completing the work of Demining Training Centre. This support is critical to implement the work plan designed for the remaining mine suspected areas in the six regions (Afar, Somali, Oromia, Gambela, Tigray and Beninshangul). Moreover, the Combat Engineering Main Department (CEMD) plans to run advanced Technical Survey by TS/RRT teams in those areas to confirm exact mined area and thereby to release the mine free of the mine suspected areas. Thus, a combination of technical survey and mine clearance will be applied utilizing land release procedures to minimize the clearance of areas to only confirmed hazard areas. This is in addition to the work of the National Defence Force Combat Engineering Department to a cleaning manually area through mechanical vegetation cutting and ground preparations. This is found to be the simplest and most cost efficient method of clearance.

Mr. President,

We have developed a time frame during which the tasks planned to be carried out over the five-year extension period are clearly spelt out in specified manner. The time frame is as follows:

2015 - 2017 : - Through utilization of non-technical and technical survey 6 regions (Afar, Somali, Oromia, Gambela, Tigray and Beninshangul) with a total area of 647,810,293 Sq. km. with 22 SHAs will be addressed;

- During the same period 452,890; 4,881,052 and 4,801,597 sq. mts. Will be cleared in the years 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively

2018 – 2020 : - Clearance will continue in surveyed areas mainly in Somali Region

In accordance with this time frame and, as we gain clarity through survey operations, we intend to submit by April 2017 an updated work plan to the States Parties based on more precise information gathered through concrete operational activities.

Mr. President,

Our landmine policy is formulated and is implemented, bearing in mind the provisions of the Convention. We need, however, transfer of mine detection and clearance technology through training in order to acquire more technical expertise in defusing and clearing mines and improvised explosive devices. We are grateful to the support and cooperation extended to us over the years and also takes this opportunity to request for the continued support to fully implement our obligations under the Convention to which we have committed ourselves of securing mine free Ethiopia and world.

Thank You