

**ZIMAC UPDATE TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON MINE CLEARANCE,
MINE RISK EDUCATION AND MINE ACTION TECHNOLOGIES, 9-11 APRIL
2014, GENEVA**

INTRODUCTION

The President of the Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties, Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies (Japan and Mozambique), distinguished delegates, allow me to give an update on Zimbabwe's obligations to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). My update will be in response to questions raised by the Co-Chairs.

CURRENT PROGRESS

Initially the suspected contamination was 310,65 square kilometers and to date a total area of 101,775 square kilometers of Zimbabwe's mined areas has been cleared, with 208, 338 anti-personnel mines having been recovered and destroyed. The current contamination is 208,88 square kilometers. You will realise that from our Extension Request, we indicated a number of milestones to be accomplished during the extension period. I am happy to report that some positive developments have taken place as follows:-

National Mine Clearance Squadron The National Mine Clearance Squadron continues to carry out survey and clearance on the Sango Border Post to Crooks Corner minefield. In 2013, the Squadron cleared an area of 140 067 square metres, recovering and destroying 5796 anti-personnel mines. It is expected that upon the completion of the remaining 8 km stretch of the first segment, land release for the segment from Limpopo River to Mwenzi River will be done by end of November 2014.

The Squadron also completed the clearance of the 0,6 square kilometre Kariba minefield in 2013 and the land has since been released for the expansion of the Kariba Hydro Electricity Power Station. In addition to the above operations, elements from the National Mine Clearance Squadron are also conducting clearance of a 1,5 square kilometre stretch at Mukumbura, which is within the Musengezi to Rwenya River minefield. This stretch will be completed by end of May 2014 to enable land release for the rehabilitation of the river banks to prevent flooding of nearby communities.

Nowergian People's Aid (NPA). The NPA completed a Non-Technical Survey of three minefields namely Sheba Forest to Beacon Hill, Burma Valley and Rusitu to Muzite Mission. NPA also completed the clearance of the initial suspected 3km stretch of the Burma Valley minefield in 2013 with the external quality control having been conducted by ZIMAC in December 2013. Currently they are clearing the remaining 900 metre stretch of the Burma Valley minefield. Land release of the Burma Valley minefield is expected at the end of May 2014, the estimated NPA completion time for remaining mined area.

HALO Trust. HALO Trust commenced Non-Technical Survey of the Musengezi to Rwenya River minefield in 2013 and to date they have surveyed a 108 kilometre stretch out of the known 335km stretch. Clearance of the minefield commenced in November 2013 and they have so far covered an area of 27 489 square metres and recovered and destroyed 419 AP mines. At the current pace, it is positively possible that by September 2014, we should be having a clear picture and action plan for this minefield.

Mine Action Standards. I am happy to inform you that the Zimbabwe National Mine Action Standards (ZNMAS 01) were approved as a legal document. As from 01 July 2013, all mine action organizations started operating on the basis of these standards.

STATUS OF THE SURVEY

Zimbabwe intends to ensure that resurvey of all mined areas is completed to enable the country to obtain clarity on the actual contamination in order to come up with a detailed work plan for the eventual clearance operations. Clearance will also be conducted concurrently with resurveys till a detailed clearance plan is adopted. The dates of completion for the resurveys are as tabulated below:-

Mined Areas	Survey/Clearance Organisation	Survey Status	Date of Completion
Musengezi to Rwenya	HALO Trust	In progress	September 2014
Sango Border Post to Crooks Corner	NMC Squadron	In progress	September 2014
Rusitu to Muzite Mission	NPA	Completed	
Sheba Forest to Beacon Hill	NPA	Completed	
Burma Valley	NPA	Completed	
Lusulu	NMC Sqn	In progress	September 2014
Mukumbura	Halo Trust	In progress	September 2014

IMPACT OF MINEFIELDS

Impact assessment done on the minefields surveyed so far, has indicated that the impact of landmines is high as communities are living, working and commuting past minefields on a daily basis and lives are affected in multiple ways as follows:-

- a. Human accidents have been and continue to be reported along the surveyed areas.
- b. Animal accidents continue and these in most cases involve cattle, which is the main source of wealth for the communities and ploughing capacity is affected as cattle is the major source of draught power.
- c. Residential areas and water sources. Communities were relocated from their land during the laying of the minefields. This has resulted in increased land pressure whereby the affected communities want to extend land use into mined areas, which they cannot do. Cattle and people now pass through unofficial gaps in the minefield to access water.
- d. Grazing and cropping land. Raising cattle and farming are the primary agricultural activities which prosper in these areas. These minefields deny access to land which could be used productively thus limiting the potential of the area.

Many of these households have indicated that once mine clearance has been concluded, they would return to these areas where the land is fertile. Dangerously, in some areas, the locals unknowingly encroached into contaminated areas during cultivation as minefield markings have been vandalized or removed. Households that have not relocated face food insecurity as the land to grow crops on is mined.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE

Zimbabwe has a significant number of mine victims and is in the process of compiling data on the victims of landmines. The compilation process is running concurrently with resource mobilization both from within and from International organizations for the purpose of assisting the victims of Anti-Personnel mines.

CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT

Zimbabwe is also engaging the International Community and other States Parties for assistance in order to address the remaining implementation challenges. The resource mobilization plan is for the country to solicit for international assistance to capacitate ZIMAC and the National Mine Clearance Squadron. Through partnership with the

International Committee of the Red Cross, the capacity of the Squadron has been enhanced through provision of specific demining equipment and training.

Security Devices, a private company based in Zimbabwe, which manufactures demining equipment donated PPE in the form of aprons and visors in December 2013. **The African Union Commission** also donated similar equipment. I sincerely hope that such generosity will continue until we complete clearance of all landmines in Zimbabwe.

Assistance from both traditional and non-traditional mine action donors can also be channeled through our current international cooperating partners to increase their mine action capacities. Basing on the survey report to be completed, Zimbabwe will be in a position to develop a strategic and resource mobilization plan based on accurate contamination data.

USE OF MECHANICAL MEANS

Terrain and vegetation have proven that employment of mechanical means is sometimes difficult and in some cases destroys the vegetation. We will however continue to engage our partners for the provision of this equipment as it may be used to clear access routes and base lanes.

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude by reiterating that Zimbabwe remains committed to fulfilling her obligations under Article 5 to ensure a mine-free Zimbabwe and the world at large through efforts being done to get rid of the landmine problem.