

**Comments on Cambodia's Extension Request  
Intersessional Meeting of the Mine Ban Treaty  
22-24 May 2019**



Cambodia has done a truly impressive effort in eliminating the threat of landmines on its territory over the past 25 years of mine action. However, Cambodia's mine contamination remains massive. While accident numbers have been going down, farmers continue taking risks to access their land before clearance is started or completed. Freeing Cambodia of landmines by 2025 will require continuity of strong national commitment, redoubling of efforts on the ground and significant additional international funding.

Among the positive points of the presented request:

- In the last nine years, Cambodia released impressive amounts of land, freeing close to 1000 villages from the threat of landmines.
- The government has provided a significant amount of national funding to its mine action program between and is committed to continue doing so.
- Cambodia has used varied land release methods, including non-technical survey, technical survey and clearance, and improved its land release procedures and standards.
- Cambodia remains committed to the 2025 mine-free Cambodia goal and has solid plans to finish its remaining job within next six years. It presented a clear plan for the period 2020-21 when it intends to release 500 priority villages, presenting together 220 km<sup>2</sup>.
- Cambodia knows what resources – both financial and human – it requires to be able to finish the job by 2025.
- In addition, it has in place a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy, which includes prospects of deployment of an additional 2000 soldiers-deminers, whose salaries and operational costs will be covered by the government. Moreover, the government has committed to provide 10% of national funding against any financial contribution from international donors. It is a great example of national ownership and a creative resource mobilization strategy!

Among points of concern that will require further follow-up:

- The Baseline survey has not been yet concluded and is still ongoing in 73 districts. Cambodia should do all it can to complete the survey as soon as possible (by 2020 at the latest) and to identify all areas suspected of mine contamination.

- The plan for years past 2021 is very general at the moment with little details provided, apart from ambitious annual land release targets. It would be useful for Cambodia to present a more detailed plan for the work between 2022-25 and provide information on what will be done, where and when.
- The overall success of meeting the 2025 goal relies on assumptions that international mine action funding will be significantly increased by 2021 and that the additional 2000 deminers will be successfully deployed. At the moment, no firm arrangements have been made in this regard and such assumptions carry considerable risk. We trust Cambodia is doing all it can to secure timely training and deployment of additional deminers as well as increased international funding.
- We understand that there are still areas along the Cambodian-Thai border that need demarcation, however Cambodia needs to make every effort to secure agreement with Thailand allowing timely clearance of border areas and to keep States Parties informed of these efforts.
- Lastly, it would be very beneficial if the Cambodian Mine Action Authority could synchronize its reporting with operators and eliminate discrepancies which make tracking progress difficult.

We applaud all the work done to date by Cambodia and the CMAA in particular and call on donors to step-up support for Cambodia's mine action program and be part of its success. Cambodia - keep up the good work and continue to show us the way to the future of a mine-free world!