

MEETINGS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE APMB CONVENTION, GENEVA 20-
24TH JUNE 2011

INTERVENTION BY THE DELEGATION OF BHUTAN ON ARTICLE 5

Since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor at the intersessional meetings of the Standing Committees, allow me to express my delegation's appreciation for the leadership provided by the Co Chairs to the work of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies. I wish to assure you, Mr. Co Chair, of my delegation's full cooperation and support in your work. I also wish to place on record Bhutan's appreciation for the indispensable role played by the ISU, and for their support and facilitation of our meetings.

Bhutan became a State Party to the Anti Personnel Mine Ban Convention on 18th August 2005, which entered into force for Bhutan on 1st February 2006. In accordance with Article 5.1 of the Convention, our mine clearance deadline is 1st February 2016. The Royal Government has every expectation that it will be in a position to make a formal declaration on full compliance of its obligations under Article 5 well within that deadline.

We had reported in our initial transparency report the existence and location of two mined areas in Gobarkunda and Nganglam sub district, both in Samdrupjonkhar Dzongkhag along our southern border. These involved a total of 103 antipersonnel mines, more specifically 50 MNM 14s and 53 M16 mines. Remote location, rugged mountainous terrain, thickly forested vegetation and undergrowth, and the impact of heavy monsoon rainfall severely challenged demining operations undertaken by the Royal Bhutan Army.

My delegation looks forward to providing further elaboration on the progress towards full compliance with our obligations under Article 5 of the Convention at the 11th Meeting of States Parties in Phnom Penh in November this year.

In the meanwhile, allow me to reaffirm the importance attached to the Convention as well as its effective implementation by the Royal Government of Bhutan. We are presently engaged in discussions with the ISU to explore means of strengthening the implementation of our commitments under the Convention, including those under Art. 7 of the Convention.