



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Presentation of Uganda on Article Five Implementation

Standing Committee Meetings on 21st to 25th May 2012

GENEVA

Delivered by

Mr. Owor John Martin

**COMMISSIONER FOR RELIEF, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND
MANAGEMENT**

UGANDA'S PRESENTATION ON ARTICLE FIVE IMPLEMENTATION AT THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON 21ST TO 25TH MAY 2012, GENEVA

The President of 11th Meeting of States Parties, His Excellency Prak Sokhonn, Co-chairs, Director of GICHD, ICBL, ICRC, Mine Action NGOs, Training Institutions, Donor representatives, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. Before I proceed, let me express my gratitude to the President, for extending invitation to Uganda to be part of this important forum, and appreciation to the invaluable support provided by GICHD in facilitating this week long meeting.

Mr. President, the information Uganda provided at the Phnom Penh States Party meeting last year in implementing its Article five, alluded to the fact that Uganda would comply with her set deadline of August 2012. This has not changed, Uganda remains committed to completing her mine-clearance obligation within this deadline.

Permit me now share with you some of the progress we have registered in our effort to clear the remaining minefields. I have also highlighted some challenges that we have to continue grappling with, as we pursue the completion deadline:

- ✦ There has been a steady progress in our clearance efforts; to date 35 minefields have successfully been cleared, out of the total 46 in the affected parts of the country. The remaining 11 are to be cleared in the remaining time frame.
- ✦ Mechanical and manual mine-clearance is ongoing in 9 minefields. Once the work is completed in these areas; the work force will relocate to clear the remaining 2 minefields.
- ✦ To date, 1,191,020 square meters of land has been either cleared or discredited. The remaining 260,711 square meters is expected to be cleared

in the remaining time frame. At least 962 antipersonnel mines have been demolished.

- ✦ Mechanical mine-clearance operation implemented through joint efforts of NPA and DDG, has significantly reduced Uganda's mine-contaminated areas that stretch from Lamwo district in northern Uganda (Ngomoromo to Bibia Bridge) towards the South Sudan border. It is anticipated that the machines with support from manual teams will clear the remaining area in two months.
- ✦ In West Nile sub-region bordering Democratic Republic of Congo, the reported minefields were re-assessed with technical assistance from DDG. The vast majority of the suspected areas were found not contaminated; this was ascertained by non-technical and technical surveys, and the comprehensive farming practised for years without accidents on parts of the areas. The area that now requires clearance in the West has been reduced to 1,342 square meters. We have since deployed a 5-man demining team to undertake technical survey and manual clearance of this area expected to complete the task in one month.
- ✦ Clearance of mined areas in Kasese and Bundibugyo districts also bordering DRC, has been completed with 19,202 square meters cleared and 201,613 square meters discredited by demining teams, destroying 5 anti-personnel mines.

Mr. President, in order to achieve maximum output and complete work within the remaining 10 weeks, the clearance pace needs to be stepped up from the present level of 14 square meters per deminer per day, while maintaining the safety and quality of the work at international standard, we are doing everything in our means to achieve this.

Aside from mines, Uganda is also affected by contamination with other explosive remnants of war (ERW). Given the shortage of time, we have suspended the EOD

operations that have been carried out continuously since 2008. The EOD teams have now been deployed in the minefields to beef up operations. Our plan is to deal with these vices after the August deadline. In this regard, we are closely working with Handicap International and the local authorities to raise ERW risk awareness among communities. We are updating locations of spotted ERWs into the IMSMA database; information that will later be used in carrying out EOD operations.

Given that ERWs still affect parts of former war zones, we shall need to sustain EOD operations for additional three years until the entire country is completely safe. We shall in this connection continue appealing to our prospective donors and partners to continue offering support to Uganda for EOD operations.

Mr. President, before I conclude this presentation, I would like to highlight that the biggest challenge that may interfere with our deadline is the un foreseen early onset of heavy rains that have washed away some crossing bridges, access roads and caused rapid growth of vegetation leading delays in the clearance operations. We shall closely work with the Co-Chairs and the ISU in sharing information on the work progress. However, the weather factor notwithstanding, we predict completion of not less than 80% of the remaining clearance work on schedule. In the interim we commit ourselves to finding a solution to speed up the progress so as not to jeopardize our completion objective.

Lastly, I wish to seize this opportunity to thank all our donors who have over the years offered tremendous support to Uganda in her vision of a mine-free country by August 2012. Let me in particular register my sincere appreciations to the Governments of Australia, Denmark, Norway and Sweden for their timely support. I also thank our partners UNDP, DDG, NPA and Handicap International for their contribution.

Owor John Martin

COMMISSIONER FOR RELIEF, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS & MANAGEMENT