

**STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE MEETINGS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE AP MINE BAN CONVENTION, 21-25 MAY 2012**

**MINE CLEARANCE, MINE RISK EDUCATION AND MINE ACTION TECHNOLOGIES**

Co-Chairs,

My delegation would like to commend the Co-Chairs for their preparations for the work of this important Standing Committee.

We remain concerned about the areas that are still contaminated by landmines and other explosive remnants of war. This contamination hampers development, as these areas cannot be used for developmental purposes such as construction, agriculture, manufacturing and housing.

Whilst we congratulate Jordan and Guinea Bissau for the completion of their mine clearance obligations, as per Article 5, we are however concerned that a number of States Parties continue to request for extensions to clearance deadlines. We are also concerned about the slow progress that has been made by those that have asked for extensions. The slow pace of clearance hinders reconstruction and development efforts in communities that desperately require land for their developmental needs. We wish to underline in this regard, the necessity for the States to draw up their clearance plans as soon as they are granted extensions. In addition, the early allocation of adequate resources will go a long way in addressing these problems.

Co-Chairs

We would like to encourage affected States to engage in cooperation and assistance activities in order to clear all contaminated areas in their territories, as soon as possible.

Furthermore, we would like to thank all States that have provided funding for demining projects and call on those that are able, to continue to do so. This will ensure that the risk of mines towards innocent people is eliminated.

I thank you.

