

MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON
MINE CLEARANCE, MINE RISK EDUCATION AND MINE ACTION TECHNOLOGIES

GENEVA, 21 - 25 MAY 2012

STATEMENT OF THE GERMAN DELEGATION
ON CLEARANCE

On previous occasions, Germany informed its partners about the contamination of the former military training area of Wittstock, located in the Land Brandenburg, with unexploded ordnance dating from the period when it was used by Soviet, respectively Russian, armed forces. The entire area in question encompasses about 144 square kilometres. A part of this area is suspected to be contaminated with cluster munitions, and a partial contamination with anti-personnel mines cannot entirely be excluded at the moment.

Since the 11 MSP in Phnom Penh, the following progress has been made:

As the new owner since Oct. 2011, the Institute for Federal Real Estate (BImA) has developed a risk management programme in collaboration with the local authorities which is being implemented. The first step of this programme includes the realisation of a danger prevention plan. The main parts of this plan are:

- The entire area is closed to the public,
- The technical survey and, if necessary, clearing of a 40 km long and 50 m broad tract of land to ensure fire prevention and environmental protection will be undertaken (scheduled completion: 2012, depending on the quantity and quality of detected ordnance),

- A network of paths and tracks is being cleared to enable emergency management (scheduled completion: 2012, depending on the quantity and quality of detected ordnance).

The implementation of these parts of the prevention plan is a crucial prerequisite for the continuation of the technical survey, mainly with regard to the occupational safety of the personnel involved in the clearing.

In order to acquire sufficient clarity regarding the state of contamination, test fields will be spread. The tests encompass all types of munitions. There are indications that the large majority of these munitions consists of UXO and, to a significantly smaller extent, of cluster munitions. Therefore, the necessary measures at this stage will concentrate on UXO and cluster munitions, whilst at the same time appropriate attention is being paid to a possible presence of APMs, which could not be fully excluded.

The utmost is being done in order to obtain timely results from the survey. Germany will keep States Parties and signatories informed about further developments.