



THE UNITED NATIONS MINE ACTION

Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction Geneva, 23 April 2007

*Intervention on behalf of the UN Mine Action Team
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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The Co-Chairs to the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction have asked the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to provide an update on the assistance we have provided to States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in meeting their obligation as per Article 4 of the Convention. It is therefore our pleasure to provide an update in this regard on behalf of the UN Mine Action Team.

As you know, there are 14 States Parties with Article 4 deadlines that occurred since the last meeting of States Parties or in the process of completing their stockpile destruction programmes. Together, these 14 States Parties must destroy approximately 15 million mines. The United Nations provides mine action assistance to 9 of these States Parties¹, but has only provided specific stockpile destruction assistance to 6 of them during the reporting period (Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and Sudan). It is important to note, however, that the responsibility to destroy stockpiled anti-personnel mines rests with the States Parties themselves; many of these States Parties have provided their own updates to the Standing Committee. Thus, our statement highlights areas where the United Nations has provided particular support; it does not necessarily represent a comprehensive account of the progress made in stockpile destruction.

The rate of compliance to date with Article 4 obligations has been particularly noteworthy. As of September 2006, all States Parties whose 4-year deadline for destruction had occurred reported completion of their stockpile destruction programmes. In fact, these 134 States Parties had together destroyed almost 38 million mines.

As we already heard today, since the Seventh Meeting of States Parties in September 2006, the **Democratic Republic of Congo** completed its stockpile destruction programme ahead of its 1 November 2006 deadline, with support from the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). UNDP also supported **Angola** to fulfil its Article 4 obligation. More specifically, on 28 December 2006, during a public ceremony, Angola destroyed its last stockpiles of anti-personnel mines.

¹ Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Montenegro, Serbia and Sudan.

During the 2005-2006 phase of the stockpile destruction program, 83,557 antipersonnel mines were located, out of this total, 10,866 were demolished and 70,179 were demilitarized and the plastic metal parts recycled while 2,515 were kept for training purposes under Article 3 of the Treaty. The following entities contributed technically and/or financially to enable Angola to carry out its obligation: the European Commission, the Government of Angola, the National Intersectoral Commission for Demining and Humanitarian Assistance for Mine Victims (CNIDAH—in cooperation with the FAA (the Angolan Armed Forces) and the National Demining Institute (INAD)—and UNDP. Angola's deadline was on 1 January 2007.

Afghanistan's deadline for destroying its stockpile of anti-personnel mines was on 1 March 2007. All efforts were made to meet this obligation and therefore we are pleased to report significant progress towards compliance.

The Afghanistan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP) includes a focus on the destruction of anti-personnel mines and other ammunitions on behalf of the Government of Afghanistan. The Mines and Ammunition Stockpile Destruction project is being implemented by UNDP in collaboration with UNMACA, the Ministries of Defense, Interior, Foreign Affairs and the National Directorate of Security (NDS) under the guidance of the Ammunition Steering Group chaired by the Minister of Defence and the Canadian Ambassador. The project receives financial support from Canada, Norway, the UK, Netherlands and the EC. All stakeholders were fully involved in establishing priorities and regularly informed on progress and partnerships will all partners has been very profitable in achieving the project's objectives.

Since the beginning of ANBP, a large number of both anti-personnel and anti-tank mines have been recovered from caches and have been destroyed. As of April 2007, 481,199 antipersonnel mines and 12,912 antitank mines had been destroyed in the following main locations and surrounding areas: Shebergan (451,811 APM), Herat (6,641 APM), Panjsher Valley (6,490 APM), Kabul area (4,691 APM) and another 11,566 APM within the rest of the country. However, Afghanistan has not yet met its Article 4 obligation because ANBP has not been given access to some caches in the Panjshir Valley by the local authorities. This issue has been raised at the highest levels in the government and, as mentioned by the Afghan delegation, recently resolved; we hope to be able to carry out the destruction of the remaining stockpiles of anti-personnel mines.

Although the stockpile destruction deadline for **Sudan** and **Burundi** is 1 April 2008, both countries are planning destruction in the upcoming months and will report on these plans to the Standing Committee in detail.

It is important to note, however, that in Burundi, the Government has reviewed its inventory and now declares a stockpile of fewer anti-personnel mines than what they included in last year's Article 7 report. The first phase of stockpile destruction will take place in May 2007, with financial and technical assistance from UNDP.

Concerning Sudan, there are a total of 14,485 different kinds of anti-personnel mines under the control of the Government of National Unity GONU, 5,000 of which will be kept for training purposes. Preparations for the destruction of the stockpiled APM are now in final stages and the destruction may happen in early May. UNDP will provide technical advice but no financial assistance in this regard.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to conclude by congratulating all the States Parties that have presented updates on the progress made towards meeting their obligation to destroy all stockpiled anti-personnel mines. The high level of compliance with this obligation is commendable and contributes to the success of the Convention; it also brings us one step closer to the goal of a world free of the threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war. But as we also heard from the Co-chairs, ICBL and others today, there are still a number of important challenges to be addressed concerning stockpile destruction. We, the United Nations, stand ready to assist States Parties in need of technical or financial support.

Thank you.