

Thailand
Lt. Gen ATTANOP

Intervention on Enhancing International Cooperation and Assistance SIRISAK
At the 10th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention TMAE
Tuesday, 30 November 2010, 15.00-18.00 hrs.

Mr. President,

[Since this is the first time Thailand takes the floor, I, on behalf of my delegation, would like to take this opportunity to express our congratulations to you on your election to this important position. Under your presidency, we are confident that the meetings this week will be a useful forum to follow up the States Parties' progress on the implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan]

Mr. President,

I observe that since the 9MSP many States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention, including Thailand, that have requested the extension for fulfilling their mine clearance obligations, have experienced a similar crucial challenge – that is, insufficient allocated national budget. This may sound like an excuse but it is indeed a reality.

I believe that the States Parties are committed to honouring their obligations under the Mine Ban Convention, however, their budget constraints, reduced capacities and increasing focus on other priority areas and economic downturns disallow them, especially developing countries, to implement the Convention in a way and pace they would have wished. Similar reasoning also applies to donor countries. International assistance and contribution is in decline and donor fatigue seems to be on the rise.

The growing mismatch between demand and supply of international assistance is a very daunting task for the international community to address collectively. The world must reaffirm its will and commitment to rid itself of land mines and to ensure safety for innocent civilians who might be injured or killed by these deadly weapons. The international community must stay the course. The global pie of international assistance must be sustained and even enlarged, rather than reduced. The bottom line is that we all must try to achieve a result we desire – a mine-free and zero-victim world.

It is also our concern that the shortfalls of international assistance will become an adverse factor for the universalization of a similar Convention which is recently embarked. From the lesson learned that assistance have usually dries up over time,

many middle and low income countries may have no confidence that they are capable of fulfilling their obligation on their own after and decide otherwise.

Mr. President,

As for Thailand, we are also affected by land mines – albeit with a lesser degree of severity compared to other countries. Many potential donor countries therefore tend to divert their attention as well as technical and financial resources away from us. But, I believe there may be a more effective alternative for international cooperation and assistance. Although Thailand realizes the vitality of national ownership to enhance our domestic capacity – both financially and technically – in order to fulfill our obligations under the Mine Ban Convention, international cooperation and constructive partnership are, nevertheless, crucial to complement our national endeavors. Our own national capacity and budget can successfully alleviate our problem of land mines only to a certain extent. Since the negative impacts of landmines on our country and population are not as severe as those in other countries, Thailand requires just a relatively minimal amount of assistance from the outside world. Once we can completely fulfill our obligations under the Convention, we are willing to offer ourselves as an additional helping hand that can increase international assistance, especially by sharing our expertise and know-how as well as transferring of clearing equipment, tools and other relevant resources, to other mine seriously affected countries.

Thailand would like to propose this “Helping Potential Helpers” model for your consideration. While the amount of international assistance available tends to be more limited, the “Helping Potential Helpers” model can provide a promising alternative to the overall success of the Mine Ban Convention.

It is by no mean that this model will divert all resources and assistance away from other mine affected countries. As we require only a minimal assistance, the diversion will take place only at the initial stage. We should not underestimate or discount the positive impacts of multiplying effect at later stages when mildly or moderately affected countries are already helped and they are ready to help other seriously affected countries. Rendering assistance to other states is our unwavering commitment as a State Party to the Convention.

To put this idea into action, Thailand through Thailand Mine Action Centre, which is the national focal point on landmines-related operations, will organize a donor

conference in Bangkok in January 2011 to explore ways to effectively mobilize greater financial resources and expertise in order to expedite Thailand's mine clearance and other activities related to landmines. Potential donors, partners and concerned organizations are cordially invited. Your valuable participation, suggestion and support are most welcome.

Mr. President,

In closing, Thailand would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the donor countries that have consistently rendered their assistance and cooperation to us during these years. We would like to particularly express our special thank to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway for their support through the Norwegian People's Aid. The continued support from every donor has significantly helped reduce the unnecessary losses of lives and limbs caused by landmines. At the same time, we also commit ourselves to enhance cooperation with our neighbouring countries and other countries particularly in the framework of South-South Cooperation. Before closing, I would also like to reiterate Thailand's commitment to contributing to the success of this noble Convention. Currently the international community is at a critical junction on the path to the mine-free and zero-victim world. A number of challenges and difficulties lie ahead of us, waiting to test our determination, unity and commitments. But, we should look at how far we have traveled on this path in order to motivate and further inspire ourselves to continue working hand in hand in order to achieve our shared noble goal.

Thank you.
