



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Statement of Uganda on Article Five Implementation

11th Meeting of States Parties, 28th Nov 2011

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Delivered by

Hon. Musa Ecweru

**MINISTER STATE FOR RELIEF, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND
REFUGEES**

**STATEMENT OF UGANDA ON ARTICLE FIVE IMPLEMENTATION AT 11MSP
IN PHOM PENH, CAMBODIA ON 27th NOV – 2ND DEC 2011**

The President of 11th Meeting of States Parties, His Excellency Prak Sokhonn, ICRC, ICBL, Mine Action NGOs, Mine Action Training Institutions, Donor representatives, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. Before I proceed, let me express my gratitude to the Government of Cambodia for hosting us in this beautiful City.

Mr. President, Uganda is among the States Parties granted with an extension period in implementing Article Five. A three-year extension term was approved in 2009 during the 9th Meeting of States Parties held in Cartagena, Colombia.

I am happy to inform this meeting that Uganda remains focused on completing the destruction of all mines in her jurisdiction within this time frame despite implementation challenges. We have no doubt in our minds that we shall finish this job on time, having to date completed a countrywide non technical survey and finalized arrangements for mechanical clearance to supplement ongoing manual clearance efforts.

Mr. President, let me highlight some of the achievements registered by the Government of Uganda since 2009 in implementing Article Five and plans to remove the remaining mine contamination by the set dead line of August 2012;

Firstly, in order to accurately determine the extent of mine contamination in the country, a non technical survey exercise was carried out this year by Danish Demining Group (DDG) with support from the Government of Norway. The survey identified 34 new suspected mined areas countrywide, covering a total of 836,185 square meters, 9 of these areas are located in Northern Uganda, 24 in the West and 1 in the Northwestern part.

Secondly, the total mined area if added to previously surveyed areas sums to 1,341,967 square meters, out of this, 349,312 square meters has to date been cleared by our manual teams and they continue to do so. The remaining 992,655 square meters should be cleared by August 2012 with 768,900 expected to be cleared mechanically.

Fourthly, since 2009, we have increased the national manual demining capacities to 127 multipurpose demining personnel seconded from Uganda Police and Uganda Peoples Defence Forces; this has increased our productivity in technical surveys and clearance. Part of this demining unit is engaged on routine explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) operations and they played a big role in the recently concluded non technical survey exercise.

Mr. President, the manual teams and the initial mechanical support provided by NPA in 2010, has enabled the total clearance of 349,312 square meters and destruction of 871 antipersonnel- and 20 antitank mines. On the other hand through routine EOD operations, the teams have significantly reduced the threat and given hope to the affected communities with the destruction of 8, 712 explosive remnants of war items and 40,977 small arms.

Ladies and gentlemen, permit me on behalf of the Government of Uganda, to express gratitude to our development partners whose contributions to the demining operations have enabled us to deal with the challenge. In particular I want to appreciate combined contributions of USD 5,700,000 from Australia, Denmark and Norway. I must also thank DDG for being good stewards and for managing these funds on our behalf. I lastly thank Norway and Sweden for accepting to contribute additional USD 850,000 for mechanical clearance.

Mr. President, as I conclude, let me provide a brief outline of our plan for completing clearance operations by August 2012:

- First of all, a demining team with a Technical Advisor has been deployed to technically survey and where required, clear the newly identified, suspected mined areas in Kasese and Bundibugyo districts in Western Uganda. The man power in this unit will be increased with the arrival of the clearance machines, and with provision of appropriate logistics so as to avoid compromising their mobility. The clearance operation in the West is scheduled to last 6 months.
- Secondly, to achieve maximum output and complete work within the remaining timeframe, manual mine-clearance pace and work quality will be

maintained at a level of 20 square meters per de-miner per day. We are stepping up field supervision and monitoring to ensure this is achieved.

- Thirdly, mechanical clearance operations are planned to commence this December, with anticipated project duration of 7 months. Discussions of implementation modalities have been completed with Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) mine action team and the machines will be arriving in the country by close of this week. In the concluded agreement, NPA will provide two heavy machines and personnel for the operation.
- Lastly, with explosive remnants of war, the Government of Uganda will continue working closely with other partners including Handicap International in mine risk education and victim assistance, to ensure the affected communities are appropriately aware of the dangers, whilst continuing to provide vital information to our EOD teams on identified ERWs. The plan is to continue with EOD operations for additional 3 years after August 2012, till the entire country is completely made safe, we shall still in this regard continue working in partnership with our donors to ensure this goal is realized.

I thank you all for listening to me and will be happy to present a completion declaration for Article five at the next Standing Committee meetings in June 2012 and consequently being declared a mine free country at the 2012 States Party meeting. It's my hope that un known factors will not interfere with our commitments to the completion dead line.