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**12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban  
Convention**

**General Exchange of Views**

**Statement by H.E. Pedro Comissário Afonso  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations and  
Head of the Delegation**

Mr. President,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the government of Mozambique, I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you on your appointment as President of the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the President of the 11<sup>th</sup> MSP, His Excellency Prak Sokhonn, for the commendable leadership during his tenure and for the warm hospitality accorded to us in Cambodia.

Mr. President,

Mozambique is now entering the final 15 Months of its 5 year extension under Article 5. Since submitting our extension request in 2008, we have achieved much progress towards our goal of a mine-free Mozambique. This includes the clearance and release of more than 27 million square meters of mine suspected areas. This amount of area cleared is already more than twice what was planned for our five year extension period and is a result of the surveys identified in our 5 year extension request and the mine-free district process that we are implementing in Mozambique. With the surveys already completed, the Government of Mozambique is making all reasonable efforts to identify all known mine suspected areas in accordance with its obligations under the convention. Information at our disposal allows us to believe that it is unlikely that any additional large mine suspected areas will be found, as we did during the first half of Mozambique's extension period. However, the identification of these new areas in the surveys completed after our 2008 Baseline Assessment required us to double our efforts to demine all known areas before the 2014 deadline. I'm happy to say, that with the support of our international partners, we have successfully increased the demining capacity in Mozambique enabling us to stay on track to complete demining in Mozambique by 2014.

The survey, clearance and release of mine suspected areas in Mozambique have already provided clear socio-economic benefits to our citizens. As more areas are cleared, security is increased, the free movement of people and goods is increasing and the cleared land is utilized by local populations to benefit their livelihoods. The number of new landmine victims is decreasing each year. So far this year, we have recorded only 1 new landmine victim, which

marks tremendous progress towards our goal of having no new landmine victims. We believe, however, that one new victim is still too many. Long after the last landmine is cleared in Mozambique, the Government of Mozambique will continue to implement its obligation to provide support to survivors of landmines.

Mr. President,

We are confident that the end of the demining process in Mozambique is closer. As of 15 November, the National Demining Institute reports indicate that there are about 11 million square meters of land contained in the 248 suspected mined areas that need to be addressed in the last 15 months before the deadline. We believe we have the necessary demining capacity and support of our international partners to complete this work.

Our greatest challenge to achieve our goal of completing demining by the 2014 deadline is the border minefields on the Mozambique and Zimbabwe border. The 3 million square meters of mine suspected area along the border presents a particular technical challenge for the deminers due to reports of dense minefields, including minimal metal mines, and the location of 2 million square meters of these minefields in the no-man's land along the border.

Due to the rough terrain and mountains along the border, some of these border minefields that are in Mozambique can only be safely accessed from the Zimbabwe side of the border. In order to overcome these challenges, the National Demining Institute of Mozambique is coordinating its demining operations along the border with the Zimbabwe Mine Action Centre. The Government of Mozambique is also planning to sign an agreement with the Government of Zimbabwe to allow deminers and their equipment free access across the border for the purpose of demining operations.

This year, the deminers in Mozambique have started work on some of the border minefields that are located in Mozambique. The National Demining Institute is closely monitoring the demining operations along the border in order to regularly evaluate the progress of demining there and address any challenges that may arise.

Mr. President,

The Government of Mozambique remains committed to implementing the 2008-2014 National Mine Action Plan in order to clear all known mined areas by the treaty deadline of 2014. In order to do so in the most cost effective and efficient manner, the National Mine Action Program is focused on increasing the demining capacity in Mozambique, including mechanical assets and implementing land release procedures. Through the Mine-Free District Evaluations that includes a district-by district approach, we are also committed doing a thorough job and making all reasonable effort to identify all known mined areas.

The successful completion of our mine action program remains a crucial priority in our efforts aimed at bringing about sustainable development in Mozambique. We have demonstrated our commitment by mainstreaming our mine action program into the core national plans of the Government, as a cross-cutting issue, thus, allowing domestic funding to be allocated to mine clearance programs through the State's Annual Budget.

Furthermore, it allowed the consolidation of the decentralization process of Mine Action to provincial and local level and brought about the improvement of the overall coordination through ownership of mine action at the local community level.

While we aim for the highest level of efficiency in mine action, we remain committed to continue working as thorough as possible for the implementation of the Mine-Free District approach. By adopting the district-by-district approach to mine action, we are confident that it will allow us to address successfully all known mine suspected areas, hence, setting a positive perspective in our efforts to address the landmine humanitarian impact.

Mr. President,

On behalf of my Government, I wish to take this opportunity to convey our sincere gratitude to all governments and international organizations that through generous support demonstrated their confidence on Mozambique's commitment, and contributed in making possible the results so far attained.

Our objectives are clear and we strongly believe that with the generous assistance from our international partners, we will succeed.

We wish to appeal for the continuation of their support and we urge other countries to join in. We hold dearly all states that have supported us since the beginning. We believe, therefore that even if they had to discontinue their support in the past, they will reconsider it and continue with assistance particularly in these crucial moment of the implementation of the extension mandate.

Finally, I would like to recall that back in 1999, when Mozambique was still considered to be one of the most mine affected countries in the world, the Government of Mozambique hosted the very first Meeting of States Parties in Maputo. Today, as Mozambique draws closer to obtaining its goal of becoming mine-free, I wish to announce that the Government of Mozambique would be honored to host the 3rd Review Conference to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in Maputo in 2014.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, let me reiterate my Government's commitment to do its utmost with a view to accomplish the clearance of all mined areas and comply with all obligations within the deadline established by the convention.

MUITO OBRIGADO!

Geneva, 3 December 2012