

CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND
TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION

13TH MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION
2ND TO 5TH DECEMBER 2013, GENEVA

Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,

1. My delegation would like to offer our felicitations to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the Presidency of the 13th Meeting of States Parties (MSP) to the Convention. We are confident that you will guide our work successfully, and we assure you of my delegation's full support. Allow us to also commend your predecessor, Ambassador Matjaz Kovacic of Slovenia, for his initiatives and guidance in the implementation of the Convention this past year.
2. Bhutan places high importance on the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention as a framework that brings together countries to discuss issues related to land mines. We are happy to be participating in this important meeting as this is the last annual assessment of the application of the Cartagena Action Plan 2010-2014 prior to the Convention's Third Review Conference and further, the meeting gives an opportunity for States Parties to find a lasting solution to the humanitarian and socio-economic problems caused by land mines.

Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,

3. My country became a State Party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention on 18th August 2005, which entered into force on 1st February 2006. In accordance with Article 5.1 of the Convention, Bhutan's mine clearance deadline is 1st February 2016. Bhutan has always maintained that we will be able to make a formal declaration on full compliance of our mine obligations under Article 5 within that stated deadline.
4. As conveyed during the 12th MSP, the minefields in Nganglam under Samdrup Jongkhar District were cleared of all mines in July 2010. These mines were laid on five tracks covering an area of 1,360 sq. meters that consisted of 41 M-16 mines.
5. The remaining three mine areas in Gobarkunda under Zhemgang District covering a total of 4,030 sq. meters that were to be de-mined in the winters of 2012-13 using the Charge Line Mine Clearing method, have now been cleared. A total of 50 MNM-14 mines and 12 M-16 mines were cleared from the three locations.
6. It is therefore my privilege and honour to inform this gathering that in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention, Bhutan has cleared all the anti-personnel land mines that were laid in its territory.

7. Bhutan now retains a total of **490** mines, of which **245** is the MNM-14 and **245** the M-16 mines. These have been retained for training purposes only. Officers and troops are given a week-long training every year on basic mine laying and clearing, and a few undergo specialized training in mine clearing and removal of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED). A total of **2370** MNM-14 and **2183** M-16 mines have been destroyed since we first joined the Convention.
8. I am also pleased to share that in early 2005 Bhutan cleared minefields that were located in Manas under Zhemgang District. This was done even before Bhutan became a party to this Convention as a responsible member of the international community committed to global happiness. These minefields covered an area of **30,000** sq. meters.
9. Bhutan would also like to congratulate Venezuela, Germany and Hungary for its completion of Article V of the Convention. We are aware that this is a demanding task and we would like to encourage all States Parties to continue with their good work towards achieving a mine free world.
10. I would like to conclude by reaffirming our commitment to the principles and objectives of this Convention and expressing our deep appreciation to the Implementing Support Unit for their dedicated support and cooperation.

Tashi Delek and Thank You.