

Eritrea's Statement in the 13th meeting of states parties to the convention on the prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction 2-6 December 2013 Geneva, Switzerland

**H.E Mr. President for the 13th MSP,
Delegates of States Parties,
Mine Action Colleagues
Ladies and Gentlemen**

Mr. President

First of all I would like to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to take the floor. I congratulate your election as a president to preside this thirteenth meeting of states parties and congratulate the former president as well for the successful completion of his leadership during the out going year meetings and other conventional activities of the states parties.

Dear mine action colleagues

Since the source for Eritrea's landmine and ERW contaminations, the rate of the impact inflicted to our people and the impediments to the national development programs was repeatedly briefed in the previous subsequent meetings, to avoid duplication/repetition of statements, I feel easier to provide your attention with the update on mine clearance and resurvey progress carried out after the transitional extension request period in the past three years that is from 2011 until the end of November 2013.

To proceed with such it needs to be recalled that during our extension request period on March 2011, it was reported that out of the 751 baseline number of mined areas or locations taken from the LIS records, only 79 number of mined areas with a total area of 30,852,678 square meters had been cleared since the completion of the LIS. This operational result may be considered insignificant portion when compared to the huge nationwide contaminations and when looked against the humanitarian expectations. But it is understood that with a sole limited resources and capacity of one small and poor nation, progress can not be expected beyond.

The government of Eritrea has the highest concern and aspiration to meet the objectives that leads us to see a mine free state and is tackling to overcome the Article 5 challenges through the implementing national agency called Eritrean Demining Authority.

During the first phase or transitional extension request, we had drafted a short term plan more focused and directed on non-technical survey tasks which was aimed for quick area reduction so that to enable us to reach the correct assessment for operational time frame for the remaining un-cleared areas which in turn is expected to help us in preparing a reasonable and acceptable extension request reports which we are going to submit it in the coming few days.

Based on that we have made the following progress. Number of mined areas kept as a base line for our transitional extension request report were **672**. In the past three years, number of areas cleared by demining and verified to be mine free by non- technical survey method are **287**. This covers total area of **73,702,463** square meters. Out of this, **157** mined areas covering total area of about **33.5** million square meters is accomplished in this year **2013**. Almost all this progress is achieved by non technical survey method.

Therefore at this stage, total number of areas addressed since the LIS are **366** covering **104,555,141** square meters and the remaining impacted number of mined areas is supposed to be **385** with a total area coverage of about **24.5** million square meters.

In preparing our proposal for the non-technical survey task, we had assumed that a big area reduction can be done from the LIS data records which was executed from 2002 to 2004. This assumption was based on our estimation from observations on the ground that although the LIS served as a bench mark for the humanitarian mine action progress, it had so many overlaps in its mined area records.

Other than this, some areas were cleared by the military engineers very early after the conflicts but not cancelled yet until currently because non-technical survey verification and assurance was needed to fulfill completion protocols for cancellation. Such assumption is asserted timely by the fact that huge portion of our operational achievements is attained by non technical survey task

Honorable colleagues,

Having provided the reports of our task progress, the displeasing information is that during the deployment of our teams for resurvey of the LIS findings, they have discovered other **49** mined areas in 5 regions of the country, namely :

Gash Barka region, sub-regions Agordat and Shambuko.

Maekel Region, sub-regions Serejeka, South-east and Berik,
 Debub region, sub-regions Areza, Debarwa, Dekemhare, Segeneiti, and Senafe.

Anseba region, sub-regions Keren, Hamelmalo, Elabered, Halhal and Habero.

Seminawi Keih Bahri region, sub-regions Afabet and Nakfa.

This new discovery of mined locations in different regions covers total area of about 9 million square meters. So adding this new figure to the remaining LIS impacted data records, we remain now with 434 mined areas covering total area of about 33.5 million square meters which needs to be addressed by clearance.

When needed for reference, detail progress made by non-technical survey for area cancellation entailing demining operations is tabulated here – in below.

Region	# areas cancelled	Size/area Cancelled in sq.mts	#discover new areas	Size of new discve areas	# area remainin	Size/area remaining in sq.mts
Gash.B	52	13,756,718	22	2,411,819	63	
Anseba	63	11,974,244	10	3,016,676	144	
Maekel	48	8,978,786	3	280,913	24	
Debub	49	12,093,847	6	1,252,255	29	
Sem.K.B	71	16,015,194	8	2,026,296	166	
Deb.K.B	4	10,883,674	-	-	8	
Total	287	73,702,463	49	8,987,959	434	33,432,818

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of my government, I re-affirm that Eritrea will continue to use its maximum efforts to undertake demining operations with the available national capacity. As noted earlier, we are on the way of preparing our reports for the request of extension period hoping to be granted appropriate to the remaining impact and we remain with our commitment to prevail upon the challenges that impede our progress to satisfy the article 5 obligations.

I thank you sir
