

Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention

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The Third Review Conference held in Maputo in 2014 adopted a political declaration, committing States Parties to complete their treaty obligations to the fullest extent possible by 2025. This was an important step: For the first time in mine action history, a clear target date was set to get us finish the job. It is an ambitious target. But it can be achieved.

Earlier this year, Mozambique declared itself officially mine-free. Thus, delivering what it had been announcing already in Maputo. Mozambique was once one of the most mine-affected countries in the world. However, Mozambique managed to bring together key factors required for successfully demining a country. Let us share those success factors in order to learn from the example given by Mozambique.

It's about political commitment, distinctive strategies, funding and accountability as well as improved survey and clearance methods.

Political commitment

Mine action was high on the agenda of authorities in Mozambique. The central government, provincial commissions, and border authorities – they all took active part in mine action efforts, thus contributing to accelerating progress. And we know, to what extent political commitment of a mine affected state is crucial in order

- to gain clarity on the extent and location of the contamination
- to plan and coordinate mine action operations
- to link them with development strategies
- and to convince the international community that their support would make a difference.

Distinct completion strategies

A second ingredient required for success is a technical one. It's the ability to distinguish between different types of contamination and to develop corresponding completion strategies.

Mine action programmes in countries exposed to mixed contamination – including deep buried bombs and items that cannot be suitably mapped – face particular challenges, since the contamination they are facing is not well defined. The very nature of this contamination makes it indispensable to acknowledge that risks will have to be mitigated over many years, even decades, through institutional settings and policies different than those addressing mines and cluster munitions.

European experience in addressing ERW from World War I and II can support countries facing such contamination today. In particular, this knowhow can guide countries in designing and implementing completion strategies for their mine action programmes. Developing an exit strategy means distinguishing different types of contamination and, for non-treaty contamination, transitioning from pro-active survey and clearance to preparedness and responses. This also implies moving from specific institutions to sustainable capacities within ministries, and from short- and medium-term planning to long-term responsibility. It's about sustainably mainstreaming mine awareness and preparedness within public management.

Funding and accountability

If we are to achieve the 2025 target, international support must continue and investments in mine action must remain at least at current level. Having said that, it will be ever more important to encourage increased contribution from recipient countries and to diversify funding sources.

Between 2008 and 2012, private donors contributed more than a quarter of the international humanitarian aid. Philanthropy is becoming increasingly important and private donors will increasingly be working on international humanitarian and development issues in partnership with governments as well as with international NGOs and civil society organisations. We will have to take this into account.

At the same time, value generated through funding will have to be demonstrated. This remains challenging for the mine action sector, but is a must. Thereby, results-based management (RBM) approaches allow moving beyond simply measuring the work done and resources spent. Identifying the difference made by interventions is essential. Thus, RBM is an intelligent way to improve effectiveness and efficiency – also in mine action.

Improved survey and clearance methods

More than 15 years after the entry into force of the Mine Ban Treaty, clarity on the extent of contamination and the square meters of land released is still lacking. This impedes progress. The overemphasis on clearance compared to survey is one of the major obstacles. The land release approach now captured in the international mine action standards provides a solution. Thus, ensuring a global and systematic application of the land release approach has to be a top priority for mine action. Employing the right resources at the right place and in the right way will be crucial to meet the 2025 target.

To conclude, we are facing a task which we will be able to accomplish – at least to a large extent – provided that political commitment, clear strategies addressing different types of contamination, funding and accountability as well as sound standards, methods and tools as are applied. And we will all be working towards these objectives.

Thank you.