

Statement by the Delegation of Thailand

Lt.Gen. Wittaya Wachirakul, Director of the Thailand Mine Action Center

14th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

1 December 2015, Geneva

please check against delivery

Agenda 2(c): Article 5 Implementation

Mr. President,

At the outset, I wish to thank you for your able stewardship of the work of the Convention over the last year, especially during a time of administrative challenges. Let me assure you of the Thai Delegation's full support throughout this Meeting. Our thanks extend as well to all members of the coordinating committee for their dedication and hard work. We also join other States Parties in welcoming Mr. Juan Carlos Ruan as the Interim Director of the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention and stand ready to continue our full cooperation with the ISU.

Mr. President,

Thailand thanks members of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation for their observations and recommendations which we have carefully studied and will take into consideration when preparing our national report next year.

Mr. President,

Thailand continues to pursue our mine clearance operations resolutely. We remain committed to the goal of a zero-victim and mine-free country. Since the beginning of 2015 up to the present, the Thailand Mine Action Centre, or TMAC, has been able to reduce over 20 million square metres of mine-contaminated areas in Thailand, bringing down the number of mine-contaminated provinces in our country from 17 to 15. The remaining Suspected Hazardous Area (SHA) is now standing at approximately 454 million square metres.

Thailand is well aware of our approaching mine clearance deadline which has been extended to 2018. We are doing our utmost to reduce our remaining SHA as much as possible in this limited timeframe. After the adoption of the Maputo Action Plan at the Convention's Review Conference last year, Thailand has applied Action 8 through Action 11 when designing our mine clearance plan for the next few years.

Mr. President,

This year, we began to apply a new land-releasing method called “Evidence-Based Survey”, or EBS. By applying this method, only the area with strong evidence of mine contamination will be categorised as Confirmed Hazardous Area (CHA). The EBS method will allow us to identify more realistic estimation of mine-contaminated land and thus enable our clearance plan to be more time-bound in this regard.

TMAC has also introduced a new categorisation of our remaining SHA into those with higher and lower degrees of clearance difficulty. Among this category, the remaining SHA are also arranged in the order of their clearance priority with the SHA located in special economic development zones topping the list of the area to be cleared first. This is to facilitate full realisation of the economic potential of these lands long hindered by landmines. Meanwhile, SHA located in border areas are at the lower rank of the priority list in order to allow demarcation processes to be implemented first.

In addition, next year TMAC will be launching our pioneering project to involve more numbers of local stakeholders in mine clearance and land releasing process in their own provinces. While the actual removal and destruction of UXOs will still be carried out by military personnel, local government officials, community leaders, and non-governmental organisations will be encouraged to play their parts in the non-technical survey process and identification of hazardous areas. We believe this model will increase the sense of relevance and ownership among local residents and eventually accelerate the momentum of our quest towards becoming a mine-free country.

Mr. President,

Thailand believes that these new mine-clearance measures will surely equip us with more capacity to release as much mine-contaminated land as possible within the limit of our extended deadline. We are convinced also that these updated measures will enable us to prepare a deadline extension request to be presented for consideration in a timely manner.

On a final note, the Thai Delegation wishes to thank in particular the Implementation Support Unit, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, and the Norwegian People’s Aid for providing us with insights and technical know-how throughout our mine clearance efforts.

I thank you, Mr. President.

* * * * *