

**OTTAWA MEETING OF STATES PARTIES, 28 NOVEMBER – 1
DECEMBER 2016**

**UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
STATEMENT ON
IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 5**

Madam President,

As this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor, I wish to thank you for all the hard work that has been put into the organisation of this meeting. It was particularly difficult this year due to problems reaching the required level of funding to host this meeting. I am grateful to you, the ISU and others that have worked hard to ensure the meeting could still take place. It is imperative that all states recognise the importance of making their financial contributions to the costs of holding meetings 90 days in advance of the planned meeting, to prevent this occurring again. I would also like to thank the Implementation Support Unit and the Committees for their role in enabling our discussions. The United Kingdom remains committed to the work and goals of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

I would now like to provide an update on the United Kingdom's actions to implement clearance of mined areas in the Falkland Islands. Delegations will be aware that the UK completed implementation of Phase 4 of demining in March 2016. This phase successfully cleared almost 1.1km² of land across 25 mined areas, with the destruction of 3,397 anti-personnel mines, 384 anti-vehicle mines, and 56 items of UXO. In

preparation for further clearance, Phase 4 also included technical surveys in three areas. The results of these surveys have helped the United Kingdom to understand better the resources needed to demine these environmentally sensitive areas in the future.

The United Kingdom announced on 14 September the commitment of a further £20m to continue the removal of anti-personnel mines from the Falkland Islands – Phase 5. This new phase of demining represents a significant increase in the UK's demining efforts. Phase 5 began in October this year and is already progressing well. This phase will clear at least 46 minefields. A significant part of Phase 5 will also comprise a technical survey which will be conducted across 27 minefields, and aims to provide a more accurate picture of the clearance challenge that remains.

The Falkland Islands continue to pose a unique challenge for demining operations. The remote location, adverse weather conditions, the environmental consequences of demining, capacity limits of the Islands to provide certain facilities for demining, (for example, medical evacuation), incomplete Argentine minefield records and the tough financial climate are all factors the United Kingdom must contend with in taking forward this work. These factors will become increasingly more significant as the later phases of demining tackle the more remote and technically-challenging minefields.

Madam President,

The previous four phases of demining have made good progress, and we look forward to successful implementation of Phase 5. I would like to

note that the small humanitarian and socio-economic impact of the remaining mined areas in the Falkland Islands decreases as the mined areas closest to population centres are cleared. Most of the remaining mined areas are in extremely remote locations, and pose negligible risk to civilians. As such, the United Kingdom considers the Falkland Islands to be 'mine-impact free'.

The United Kingdom remains committed to transparency with regards to its obligations under the Convention. Its understanding of the requirements of demining the Falkland Islands continues to evolve, and the United Kingdom will update the Committee as Phase 5 progresses.

Finally Madam President, I would like to make clear that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. The principle and the right of self-determination as set out in Article 1.2 of the Charter of the United Nations and Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights underlies our position. The United Kingdom is clear that the future of the Falkland Islands should be determined by the people of the Falkland Islands, in accordance with our obligations under the UN Charter.