

Chairman Statement on 15th MSP Meeting in Santiago de Chile 28th November to 1st December 2016

Allow me express my sincere appreciation to the Government and the people of Chile for hosting 15th MSP in this wonderful City. And since it is the first time for me to take the floor, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of this meeting.

Mine Action Programme in the Republic of South Sudan has been running very smoothly since the time of its inception. All the NGOs Nationals and Internationals who opted to take up this responsibility, have exerted marvelous efforts to make sure that landmines and any other dangerous devices available in every corner of the Country are totally removed and eliminated. We in the Government have been very keen to see into it that development would not be hindered, schools would render services unabated, health centres would function and their services also reach citizens in their home areas. Roads are paved and built, agricultural products have to reach the intended markets and so on and so forth. We knew all those would be implemented only when there is no threat of those unforgiving weapons in our Country.

2020 was our targeted year to declare South Sudan a mine free country. However sailors do not always wish to have storms in the sea, we were wronged, our hopes to achieve that were dashed. The country, unfortunately went back to civil war late 2013. Albeit, it was quickly resolved when regional countries of IGAD, AU and TROIKA intervened to bring an end to it. Its residues are still hampering operations in some parts of the country as we speak. Areas that were cleared are experiencing new contamination once again not necessarily by anti-personnel landmines but by UXOs and ERW. International humanitarian de-miners are practically facing a lot of security challenges from rebel forces. This is happening in spite of august 2015 peace agreement signed by the warring parties.

Ladies and Gentlemen

let me give you a brief account of what we have done so far in the field of operation

- 1/ open hazardous area 705
- 2/ closed hazardous area 13,399
- 3/ area released is over 1 billion sqm²
- 4/ devices destroyed are 2,901,491
- 5/ km of roads cleared 27,450 km

Mine Risk Education (MRE) programme has been progressing very well. So far 3,127,761 persons have received risk education.

Total number of Victims are 4,917 persons

However, we still urge the international community to continue rendering their usual and unwavering support to mine action programme, for without that we will not succeed in combating those dangerous devices. Equally donors effective role is needed in provision of support to the NGOs in order to enhance reasonable services to the Government and the people of South Sudan, this is the only way we can be able to save innocent lives from the York of landmines.

Challenges: the challenges we currently face are as follows;

1/ security in some areas where rebels are active

2/ funding to the national authority staffs to amicably carry out their assigned duties (QA, QC) and field visits

3/ training of staff in other words capacity building in the areas of concern, IMSMA and operations

4/ institutional capacity building, computers, printers, photo copy machines and other accessories, means of mobility, chairs and tables

5/ natural reasons e.g terrain and weather do also pose immobility as sometimes flights are required by travelers to reach areas of their needs, NGOS and Commercial companies are forced to come to stand down for at least three or more months.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all mine action implementers (NGOs and commercial companies) that are doing commendable job in my country, we assure them that their relentless efforts to save lives and limbs of our people will not go unrecognized. We would also like to thank our Donor community because they are the back bone of mine action operations for without them nothing can be achieved in this field. Again I would like to extend the word of thanks to UN family in general and UNMAS in particular for their continuous assistance to mine action programme. And finally my appreciation goes to the Government and National Mine Action Staff who have not failed their duties in hard and horrible movements of their needs.

Thank you very much