



STATEMENT OF H.E. GEN. SEREI KOSAL  
HEAD OF CAMBODIAN DELEGATION AT THE OPENING OF  
THE 16<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO MINE BAN TREATY

VIENNA, AUSTRIA, 18-21 DECEMBER, 2017

Mr. President;  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;  
Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Cambodian delegation, I would like to convey our congratulation to the great services and leadership of H.E Mr. Ambassador Thomas Hajnoczi of Austria for the convention in capacity as the president of the sixteenth Meeting of States Parties. Taking this opportunity, I would also like to convey our congratulation to Her Excellency Suraya Dalil, Ambassador of Afghanistan to Switzerland and the UN in Geneva, the president elect of the Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties and the fifth woman to lead the work of the States Parties and I wish Her Excellency have great successes in your new mission.

Mr. President,

Cambodia initiated our landmine and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) clearance along the Cambodia-Vietnam border with women soldiers of the Cambodian People's Revolutionary Army in 1979 and the official humanitarian mine clearance incepted in 1992. As one of the advocates to establish the convention, Cambodia signed up the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention on 3 December 1997. Taking this opportunity, Cambodia wish to join the convention in celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary for great accomplishments that we have made together aiming to build a mine free world.

In commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, I would like to highlight the key achievements and continuing efforts that Cambodia has been undertaking to address the obligations of the Convention as follows.

- In response to the article 4 of the convention, Cambodia becomes one of the 90 states that has declared no longer hold stockpiled landmines.
- Under article 5, Cambodia has made all of our possible efforts and resources to conduct surveys ranging from Level One Survey or Impact Survey to Baseline Survey aiming to identify, mark and quantify all suspected and known landmine/ERW contaminated areas throughout Cambodia. Over 161 districts out of 197 districts, we identified approximately 1,970 km<sup>2</sup> of land is still contaminated and needs to be addressed by 2025.
- We have released some 1,600 km<sup>2</sup> of landmine/ERW contaminated land, found and destroyed more than one million anti-personnel mines, almost twenty five thousand anti-tank mines and almost 3 million explosive remnants of war by our accredited national and international operators: CMAC, NPMEC, HALO Trust, MAG, NPA, CSHD and APOPO.
- Cambodia has also seen an expansion of Mine/ERW Risk Education (MRE). In the early 1990s', MRE consisted of mass awareness campaigns about the risks of mines and ERW. Moreover, the design of MRE recognized that individual behaviors were driven by livelihood issues has been developed into a more community-based and tailored responses. MRE is also integrated into a sustainable and regular system such as school curriculum, clearance operations and safe village/commune policy of the Ministry of Interior. Cambodia also celebrated the national Mine Awareness Day which regularly was held every year on 24<sup>th</sup> February to raise public awareness of the danger of the mines and ERW and to commemorate the achievements made to address the landmine issues.
- The concerted efforts from the national, sub national circles and international community have brought about a sharp reduction of casualty rate to below 100 casualty from 2012 till present and comparing to the worse year 1996 reached a peak approximately 4,320 casualty. However, the current casualty number is still too high, and physical, psychological, socio-economic negative impacts are unacceptable, and a great social burden for the government and it doesn't mean that there are less landmines.
- The National Mine Action Strategy (NMAS) 2018-2025 has been developed and approved by the Royal Government of Cambodia and will serve as a better comprehensive roadmap to guide all resources and capacity of mine action programs to the

- right directions and to achieve our explicit goals. Performance Monitoring System (PMS) is being developed and utilized as a yardstick for measuring the successes of the NMAS.
- Under the international framework of Persons with Disabilities (PWD), Cambodia has adopted Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Locally, Cambodia has a comprehensive legislative and policy framework to guarantee the rights and address the needs of PWD. Cambodia is undertaking the collection of disaggregate data on survivors receiving services obtained from relevant service providers. Sufficient and accurate data will help the PWD stakeholders to avoid overlap of responsibilities and allocate resources effectively and efficiently.
  - Cambodia was privileged to serve the universalization of the convention in the region in its capacity as a hosting country and president of the eleventh Meeting of the States Parties which was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
  - Cambodia has also great honor and privilege to join the Peace Keeping operations under United Nations framework and received the UN blue beret. From 2006 to April 2017, 4,769 military personnel including 196 female have been deployed in countries such as Republic of Mali, Sudan, South Sudan, Lebanon, Central African Republic, Syria, Chad, and Cyprus. In promoting south south cooperation, Cambodia welcomed a number of countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Afghanistan, Nepal, Columbia, Peru, Eritrea, Mozambique, Angola, Sudan, Tajikistan, etc.
  - Cambodia integrated mine action into the RGC's major national development policies and strategies. Mine action was added as a ninth Cambodian Millennium Development Goal and now as 18<sup>th</sup> Cambodian Sustainable Development Goal.

It would be a great pleasure for us to show you more detail about our achievements in twenty years of implementation of the convention at our side event which will take place on 21 December 2017.

Mr. President,

The great jobs we have done so far have not yet produced a complete end state land. The remaining challenge is still huge. According to the latest update of baseline survey, approximately 1,970 km<sup>2</sup> of contaminated land needs to be released.

The Royal Government of Cambodia under wise leadership of Samdach Akak Mohasena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Royal Kingdom of Cambodia and the president of the National Mine Action Authority unswervingly remains committed to fulfill the obligations of the convention and continues to prioritize mine action. Cambodia really needs to clear the contaminated land without further delay, given increasing developments need to take place safely and growing population pressingly needs land for their resettlement and farming. By enhancing the ownership of the mine action program, every year the Royal Government of Cambodia commits the national budget both in kind and cash contribution to mine action ranging from management/administration to victim assistance, Mine Risk Education, and mine clearance operation in support for infrastructure development. To meet a complete end state land, Cambodia really wishes to see our current and future donors to provide more funds and double increasing current funding to about 50 million USD per year.

Beyond the convention, Cambodia is facing a critical emerging situation that is the chemical bombs which were dropped during Vietnam-US war in 1970's. They have been discovered in the eastern part of the country, and their effect and harm to the villagers is quite a concern. Thanks to the UN experts dispatched to Cambodia to start the investigation of the chemical bombs. I hope that these peril chemical bombs will be removed as soon as possible to avoid the threat to the health of our innocent people.

As one of the pioneers of the movement to ban landmines, I would like to reiterate that Cambodia will continue its works and looks forwards to cooperate closely with neighboring countries and others to meet all obligations stipulated in the Convention especially in Article 5.

Let me conclude by thanking all partners with whom we have worked over the years to help reduce the painful and persistent legacies of the conflicts that inhibited Cambodia. We would like to dedicate all of laurels to our heroes and heroines as deminers, who risk their lives to save other people's lives and limbs.

We remain, as always, fully committed to make our country and the world free from the threat of landmines.

Thank you.