

Statement of the Delegation of Thailand
By Gen. Sittipol Nimnuan
Director General of Thailand Mine Action Center
Consideration of the general status and operation of the Convention:
Clearing mined areas
18th Meeting of the State Parties
..... November 2020

Mr. President,

At the outset, on behalf of the Royal Thai Government, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to you and your team, as well as to the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) for the arrangement of this meeting. Although we are meeting virtually, my delegation is confident that your able leadership and the dedicated ISU will bring this meeting to a successful conclusion.

Mr. President,

Mine Action is still an urgent and important priority for Thailand. After we were granted a second extension to our mine-clearance deadline at the 16th Meeting of the States Parties, we have put our utmost effort to the mine clearance operations and are committed to fulfill the obligations under the Convention by achieving a mine-free Thailand by 2023.

To ensure that our works are on track and on time, we have submitted our updated workplan on Article 5 to the ISU in 2019 to address the remaining challenges of 360,000,000 sq.m. possible mine contaminated areas. Thailand's Five-Year Plan for mine-clearance can be divided into 2 phases. First, from 2019 – 2020, demining work will focus on Non-Technical Survey (NTS) to obtain precise information on mine contaminated areas. Second, from 2021 – 2023, our operation will focus on the Technical Survey and clearance based on information from phase 1.

During 2019 - 2020, Thailand planned to release 269,000,000 sq.m. of land. However, we were able to release approximately 300,000,000 sq.m. of mine-free land to the community by 2020, achieving more than 110% of the goal for the first phase. The safe areas were returned to local government and community for further usage. As a result of the Phase 1 operation, 4 additional provinces of the country have become mine-free. We are currently preparing to shift the operation to phase 2 of the plan.

Mr. President,

This year, Thailand, with the assistance from the Thai Civilian Deminer Association (TDA), has undertaken one of the most difficult demining operations in Ubon Ratchathani, “The Rueang Phueng Demining Operation 2020”. Access to the area had been extremely challenging as the 30,000,000 sq.m. of the Confirmed Hazardous Areas (CHAs) is surrounded by high cliffs and has no road access. The Royal Thai Armed Forces decided to use necessary airlifts to transport both personnel and equipment in and out of the area of operation. With this initiative, the Thailand Mine Action Center could successfully complete its operation within one month and was able to release the entire CHA as well as destroy more than 1,700 landmines and UXOs.

At present, most of the remaining Suspected Hazardous Areas (SHAs)/CHAs are located along the Thai-Cambodian border, and accessibility to these areas is of vital importance. Thailand pushed forward the pilot project on demining cooperation with Cambodia and successfully conducted the “Pilot Project on Demining Cooperation along the Border of Thailand and Cambodia” in March 2020. The project enabled Thailand to release 95,000 sq.m. in Sa Kaeo Province while Cambodia was able to release more than 120,000 sq.m. This pilot project will be used as a model for future demining cooperation between Thailand and Cambodia.

Mr. President,

The achievement I mentioned would not be possible without the support and commitment from both Governments and all stakeholders. I would like to take this opportunity to convey our sincere appreciation to all partners for their support and contribution to the mine-clearance tasks, namely the Governments of Cambodia, Japan, Norway and the United States of America, the Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA), Thai Civilian Deminer Association (TDA), and most recently, the Golden West Humanitarian Foundation (GWHF).

Lastly, I wish to reiterate Thailand’s commitment to meet the mine clearance target and declare a mine-free Thailand by 31 October 2023. We will continue to participate actively and constructively under the framework of the Convention and will keep the Member States informed of our progress and actions.

Thank you.
