

General Statement of the

Republic of the Sudan

9th Meeting of States Parties
*“Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,
Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel
Mines and on their Destruction”*

Geneva, 24-28 November 2008

Presented by:

Mr. Jurkuc Barac Jurkuc, Chairperson, Southern Sudan Demining Commission,

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,
Good morning

Mr. President,

It is my pleasure to report that since the last meeting of the States Parties held at Dead Sea, Jordan, in November 2007, with support from the UN, the donor community and the national and international organizations, the Sudan has made considerable progress in fulfilling its obligations under the Mine Ban Convention and addressing the landmine/ERW contamination problem in the country.

Mr. President,

Sudan continues to attach great importance to the clearance of high priority roads and routes to facilitate the return and settlement of refugees and IDPs, and safe movement of population to enable them resume normal livelihood activities and to provide conducive environment for reconstruction and development. Since January 2007, the national mine/UXO teams completed clearance/verification of six high priority tasks including the clearance/verification of 446 km long Babanusa-Wau railway line, and 429 Km high priority roads in eastern and central parts of the country.

I am pleased to announce that all the costs of the above operations projects and all the costs of the National Mine Action Centre and the Southern Sudan Demining Commission were covered by the Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan. During 2007 and the first half of 2008, the Government of National Unity spent approximately 7.5 Million US Dollars while the Government of Southern Sudan spent 1.5 Millions US Dollars to cover the cost of various mine action activities.

Mr. President,

Sudan is not alone in addressing its landmine/ERW problem. I am pleased to report that the implementing partners of the United Nations Mine Action Office (UNMAO) and other national and international mine action organizations operating in the Sudan have played an important role in the clearance/opening of strategic roads/routes and clearance of high priority areas. As of October 2008, of the 4,050 dangerous areas identified through survey activities, 2,170 have been cleared while 1,880 are awaiting clearance.

Since January 2008, more than 8.5 Million square meter of high priority land has been cleared making it a total of more than 43 million square metre high priority cleared so far across the country. During clearance operations more than 7,300 antipersonnel mines, 220 anti tanks mines, and more than 200,000 pieces of small arms and explosive devices were been recovered and subsequently destroyed.

In addition, the implementing partners of the UN Mine Action office and national and international organizations provided MRE training to more than 500,000 individuals in communities at risk, bringing the total number of people trained in MRE to more than 2.3 million.

In addition, NMAA, NMAC and SSDC are working with the UN Mine Action office and other stakeholders to develop a three year operations plan covering the period of 2009-2011. With the implementation of this plan, Sudan aims to clear 80 percent of high and medium affected areas by the end of 2011.

Mr. President,

In compliance of Article 4 of the Mine Ban Convention, the Sudan destroyed the second and last batch of 6078 stockpiled anti-personnel mines on 31 March 2008 in Juba, making it a total of 10,656 stockpiled AP mines destroyed. With the destruction of this 2nd batch of the known stockpiled antipersonnel Sudan fulfilled its obligation of the Mine Ban Convention, under Article 4. Sudan has retained 4,997 antipersonnel mines for permitted purposes. However, we have discovered additional abandoned catches of AP mines. These newly discovered AP mines are accounted for and will be destroyed in the near future and reported in the Article 7 Report.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen,

As part of the National Mine Action Strategic Framework, a transition plan to facilitate the transition of the management of mine action from the UN to national authorities was concluded on 18 Nov. in Juba with support from the UN Mine Action Office, UNDP and other relevant stakeholders. With the implementation of this transition plan, all mine action responsibilities will be transferred to full national ownership and management by 2011.

Mr. President,

Socio-economic rehabilitation and re-integration of landmine/ERW victims continues to remain high on the national agenda. The Sudan has signed the "Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities". Preparations for the ratification of the convention are in progress.

The staff members of the NMAC and SSDC continue to develop their capacities in various fields of mine action including coordination, planning, priority setting, monitoring/supervision and reporting. More than 100 staff members have been trained in all the above fields. NMAC and SSDC are working with the UN Mine Action Office and UNDP to develop and implement a comprehensive on the job-training programme to provide opportunities for these staff members to exercise their knowledge and gradually assume responsibilities for various functions as part of the implementation of the transition plan.

Mr. President,

Mine action in the Sudan continues to remain high on the national agenda, both at the level of the Government of National Unity (GoNU) and the Government of the Southern Sudan (GOSS). As recognition of the efforts of the Sudan mine action programme, H.E President of the Republic awarded the United Nations Mine Action Office (UNMAO) in 2007 the highest Presidential Award for its significant achievements.

Mr. President,

On behalf of the government and the people of the Republic of the Sudan, I would like to take this opportunity to once again extend my sincere appreciations to the donor community, the UN, and all mine action organizations working in the Sudan for their continued support and cooperation in addressing the landmine/ERW contamination problem in the Sudan.

Thank you,