

**Statement by the Delegation of Thailand  
at the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention  
Intersessional Meetings  
Thematic Session - Completion and Sustainable National Capacities  
23 June 2021**

Mr. President,

Thailand considers mine action as an urgent and the important priority. After we were granted the second extension at the 16MSP, Thailand Mine Action Center (TMAC) has been working tirelessly on the mine clearance operations. In 2020, Thailand was able to release an additional 157,070,466 sq.m., mainly through cancellation. During such period, we were able to recover 9,355 anti-personnel mines and 497 ERW. During the course of 2019 – 2020, Thailand successfully completed Phase 1 operations, which focused on Non-Technical Survey (NTS), by releasing nearly 300,000,000 sq.m. for safe use, exceeding our initial plan which aimed to release 270,000,000 sq.m..

In 2021, Thailand has moved towards Phase 2 operations, focusing on Technical Survey (TS) and Clearance based on the information acquired from Phase 1 operations. According to our plan, an additional 30,000,000 sq.m. will be released by the end of 2021. As of 31 May 2021, Thailand has managed to release nearly 20,000,000 sq.m. for safe use, and recovered more than 16,000 mines and UXOs in less than six months. These numbers, however, also reflect the challenges which lie ahead for our mine clearance operations – they show that the areas left to be cleared are heavily contaminated. In addition, most of them are in remote locations with difficult terrains and some are impossible to reach via land access. Moreover, other challenges remain in the areas along the border which require coordination with neighbouring countries. At present, approximately 43,300,000 sq.m. in 7 provinces remains to be cleared. Although this number accounts for less than 2% of the total previously contaminated areas, the remaining areas are extremely rough and challenging. Despite these difficulties, Thailand remains committed to fulfilling our obligations under the Convention.

Mr. President,

Thailand is also committed to carrying out the Mine Risk Education (MRE) activities, which we consider vital to the humanitarian mine action efforts. Thailand continues to address the issue in the most comprehensive manner, by carrying out our MRE operations in parallel with survey, clearance and victim assistance activities, in line with Section VI of the Oslo Action Plan. Thailand believes that MRE significantly contributes to reducing the number of new cases of mine-related accidents.

Since early 2020, the outbreak of the COVID – 19 pandemic has imposed heavy restrictions on traditional MRE approaches. Such restrictions force us to seek alternative approaches to perform MRE operations. To overcome such challenges, TMAC works with the Village Health Volunteers of the Ministry of Public Health – the locals who are responsible for daily health inspections and COVID – 19 screenings in the villages. Under this initiative, TMAC personnel regularly accompanies the Village Health Volunteers during their daily visits to the areas heavily affected by landmines, and integrate the MRE work into the Village Health Volunteers’ activities. This approach allows Thailand to conduct effective MRE activities with the intended target groups without being impacted by the fight against COVID – 19.

Other alternative MRE approaches, which are effectively carried out under conditions of physical distancing, also include local radio broadcast and social media platforms. In mine-affected areas in Thailand, radio programmes are co-hosted by community leaders and TMAC’s MRE staff. Channels of communication are also created on social media platforms among local officials, community leaders and the local community, for the purpose of awareness raising, as well as reporting on the UXOs and landmines found in the area.

In addition, during the time of year with high movement of population during long holiday seasons when most Thais visit their homes, some of which are in mine-affected areas, MRE activities are also carried out in order to ensure that people travelling from other areas are aware of the danger from landmines. Such activities are in line with Action #30 of the Oslo Action Plan.

Mr. President,

The above-mentioned efforts also require cooperation with our international and local partners. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners, namely the Governments of Japan, Norway, and the United States, the Norwegian People's Aid, the Thai Civilian Deminer Association, and the Golden West Humanitarian Foundation, for their vital support and contribution to the mine action efforts in Thailand.

In closing, let me reiterate once again Thailand’s commitment to the Convention and our full support for the work of the Convention.

Thank you.

\*\*\*\*\*