

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION BY THAILAND

COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION (Austria, Canada, Norway, Zambia)

Intersessional Meetings 30 June -2 July 2020

I. Progress in implementation (OAP Action #22, #8)

1. Thailand reported that in 2019, it addressed 81 mined areas measuring 142,132,159 square metres, including 128,442,103 square metres cancelled, 13,594,778 square metres reduced and 95,278 square metres cleared destroying in the process 2,677 anti-personnel mines and 158 other items of explosive ordnance. Thailand reported that as a result of these activities Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Son provinces became mine free in 2019.
2. Thailand also reported that it discovered an additional 325,036 square metres of suspect hazardous areas (SHA) in 4 provinces, 247,245 square metres in Sa Kaeo Province, 2,332 square metres in Trat Province, 2,030 square metres in Chanthaburi Province, and 73,429 square metres in Buri Ram Province.
3. The Committee noted with satisfaction that progress reported by Thailand is above the estimated amount of area projected by Thailand to be addressed in its 2019 updated work plan. The Committee observed that information provided by Thailand on progress in implementation allowed for comparability with that provided in its 2019 updated work plan. The Committee noted that Thailand had improved the quality of information by reporting in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards, (IMAS) and by using the Guide to Reporting (Action #22, #8).

II. Clarity regarding remaining challenge (OAP Actions #18, 22)

4. The Committee observed that Thailand had provided a high degree of clarity on its remaining challenge (Action #18). Thailand reported a total of 254 mined areas in 9 provinces measuring 218,194,245 square metres, remain to be addressed, including 82 confirmed hazardous areas (CHA) measuring 14,549,633 square metres and 172 SHA measuring 203,644,612 square metres (Action #22).
5. The Committee observed that, with survey activities ongoing, the remaining challenge in Thailand will be further clarified following survey of SHAs, at which time Thailand will be able to present more precise information on the remaining challenge. The Committee welcomes updated information on the result of these efforts.

III. National plans for clearance and survey (OAP Actions #1, #2, #3, #19, #20, #26)

6. The Committee observed that Thailand had a national evidence based and costed plan for clearance and survey in place (Action #2, #19). Thailand reported that it would address a total of 218,194,245 square metres in 2020, including 14,549,633 square metres of CHA and 203,644,612 square metres of SHA (Action #20). The Committee noted that Thailand has continued efforts towards a pilot project on demining cooperation with Cambodia along the Thai-Cambodian border.

7. The Committee encourages Thailand to provide information on its efforts to integrate Convention implementation activities into national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, humanitarian response plans (Action #1).
8. The Committee observed that in 2019 the Royal Government of Thailand allocated US \$7.5 million in support to its mine action programme. In this regard, the Committee encourages Thailand to continue to provide updates on the allocation of state resources and international support of its work plan (Action #1).
9. The Committee would welcome further information from Thailand on its efforts to ensure consideration of gender and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities in the development of its work plans as well as in ongoing work to achieve completion of its obligations under Article 5 (Action #3).
10. The Committee observed that Thailand had provided information on efforts to establish a sustainable national capacity to address any previously unknown mined areas that may be discovered following Thailand declaring completion of its Article 5 obligations in its 2017 extension request, indicating that “Five Humanitarian Mine Action Units (HMAU) were established to conduct demining operations and cooperate with other local organizations in conducting MRE and victim assistance” (Action #26).

IV. Efficient and expedient implementation (OAP Actions #5, #9, #27)

11. The Committee noted that in its 2019 updated workplan Thailand reported that it would continue to revise the current national mine action standards to ensure they suit operations. The Committee would welcome from Thailand further information concerning the status of its National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) and if NMAS are up to date with IMAS to ensure the efficient and expedient implementation of its mine action programme (Action #5).
12. The Committee noted that in its 2019 updated work plan Thailand reported that it has, “built capacity of its information management team, systems and processes”. In this regard, the Committee would welcome further information from Thailand on its efforts to maintain an accurate and up-to-date information management system (Action #9).
13. The Committee noted that Thailand had included reference to efforts taken to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance operations and welcomes further information from Thailand in this regard (Action #27).

V. Actions in accordance with plans in extension requests and decisions on them

14. The Committee recalled that in granting Thailand’s request, the Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties (16MSP) requested Thailand to submit updated information on several matters. The Committee welcomes the information provided by Thailand regarding; progress made relative to the commitments contained in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Work Plan contained in Thailand’s request; the outcomes of survey efforts and how additional clarity obtained may change Thailand’s estimation of the remaining implementation challenge; update on efforts put forth during Phase 1 of Thailand’s Work Plan to prepare for Phase 2 of the Work Plan, including the progress of negotiations in order to address Areas to be Demarcated; and, resources made available by the Royal Government of Thailand to support implementation efforts.

15. The Committee observed that Thailand had acted on the decisions of the Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties (16MSP) by submitting an updated work plan to the Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties.

16. The Committee would welcome updated information from Thailand on the following decisions of the 16MSP:

- Update on progress in updating the National Mine Action Standards to be in line with the latest version of IMAS and the results of this effort;
- External financing received and including its efforts to expand its civilian demining capacity and the results of these efforts;
- Updates on efforts to explore new technology to help survey areas that are hard to access near the borders and the results of these efforts; and
- Update on efforts to make continuous improvements in the capacity of its information management team, systems and processes to enable more precise information on survey and clearance operations to be collected and displayed.

VI. Mine risk education and reduction (OAP Actions #28-32)

17. Thailand reported in detail on the actions it has taken to effectively exclude the population from areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines. Thailand reported that MRE operations are conducted in line with Action #6 of the Oslo Action Plan and are planned to ensure that the most vulnerable are kept informed of the risks and are adapted to suit specific conditions or local settings, including in local languages, social media communication platforms (Action #32).

18. The Committee would welcome further information on Thailand's efforts to integrate mine risk education activities with wider humanitarian, development, protection and education efforts (Action #28). The Committee would also welcome further information on Thailand's efforts to provide context-specific mine risk education and reduction programmes, (MRE/R) on the basis of a needs assessment to ensure these programmes are sensitive to gender, age, disability and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account (Action #29). The Committee would welcome further information on Thailand's efforts to link mine risk education and reduction programmes and messages to an analysis of available casualty and contamination data and its efforts to develop a national capacity to deliver these programmes (Action #30, #31).