



REPÚBLICA DE MOÇAMBIQUE

MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS E COOPERAÇÃO

**STATEMENT
BY
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BEFORE THE STANDING COMMITTEE, ON THE AGENDA ITEM:
MINE CLEARANCE, MINE RISK EDUCATION AND MINE TECHNOLOGIES**

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Mr. Co-chair,

At the outset, I would like to convey my delegation's gratitude for you, Mr. Co-chair for presiding once again the meetings of this Committee. My delegation is fully confident that with your great experience, we will reach a successful outcome of this debate.

Mr. Co-chair

In our last presentation we stressed the importance the Government attaches to the mine Action Program, both because of its importance in contributing towards socio-political stability that prevails in the country, and also because of its role in the overall government strategy of poverty reduction, and thus enhance living standard of all Mozambicans.

In spite of positive developments that have taken place in the context of the implementation of the five years plan, covering 2002/2006, the mine action program still faces daunting challenges.

Last year accomplishments include clearance levels of 6.9 million square meters, 10 thousand, one hundred sixteen mines found and destroyed, plus 13 thousand four hundred eleven UXOs destroyed. Such level of clearance activities impacted positively on 126 villages accounting for 18.9% area reduction with roughly 326 thousand beneficiaries. In terms of accidents, we registered a total of 13, making 14 new victims, resulting in six deaths. In the previous year, 2002, a total area of 8.9 million square meters was cleared, eleven thousand, five hundred and thirty two mines as well as one thousand, eight hundred and sixty-two UXOs destroyed, while accidents made forty seven victims.

Nonetheless these clearance levels are quite bellow the expected ten million square meters target of the five year plan and thus jeopardising the 2006 five year plan deadline for all high and medium impact areas to be cleared, while all low impact areas are surveyed and dealt with accordingly. In addition, new suspect mined areas are being spotted by both provincial and local authorities, and operators themselves, further complicating the problem of landmine in Mozambique.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Unfortunately, these developments are being met by some of our donors and operators by scaling down their respective levels of interventions. We recognise that such anticipated departure is partially a direct response to the 2006 deadline stated in the five-year plan, well before its outcome had been addressed. That is why we will be conducting a mid term review of the five year plan in order to assess the validity of both its objectives and targets for the rest of its remaining period. Meanwhile we should and ought not loose sight of the work that needs to be carried out still until such a time the country is considered to be safe from presence of mines.

The Government's efforts in this area are clear. First we are working in order to ensure a more coordinated effort that is focused on the conduct of level II survey and clearance activities. Considering the huge amount of land suspect of being mined, that is, more than five hundred million square meters; it is only wise to conduct level II survey in order to allow further area reduction of those identified but unchecked suspect mined areas. To this end, a technical

meeting with the participation of all existing operators is being convened later this month for exchange of views on the best ways to carry out such activity, using the available resources.

Next, another area where we are focusing our efforts has to do with mainstreaming mine action activities within the government poverty reduction strategy, while ensuring commensurate Government contribution to the mine action activities. To date, government contribution has been mostly geared towards mine action custom clearance activities and other administrative costs. With this new approach, Government contribution is primarily to be targeted to mine action activities in an effort that will reflect both increased ownership and full commitment to the program.

Lastly and not the least, the Government is focusing its efforts in ensuring an endogenous capacity building activities, geared towards a better coordinated and managed mine action program, and towards the development of a national demining capacity. With such activities, it is expected that higher and secure productivity gains will be attained while developing more effective priority setting mechanisms, from the provincial and local levels, to the national level that is accompanied by appropriate data collection and dissemination.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Let me now turn to another important component of the program: Mine Risk Education. Mine Risk Education activities in Mozambique have yielded positive returns to the program, with decreasing levels of accidents and number of victims in the last three years. Last year a total of thirteen accidents caused fourteen victims and resulted in six deaths as opposed to the 47 victims in 2002. Unfortunately we cannot say that we are in presence of a positive trend as it relates to the numbers of accidents and victims of mines. This year alone, the first five months witnessed a sharp increase in the number of victims, twenty three in only six accidents that resulted in three deaths. The pattern of such accidents show uneven distribution with occurrences being registered in all the three regions of the country, south, centre and north, in Maputo, Sofala, Tete and Cabo Delgado Provinces.

This development confirms what we have been stating that the level of contamination that affects the country still merits a very serious attention, for the risk of somebody in the rural areas stepping into a mine is still very high.

The uneven distribution of these accidents and the reported new suspect mined areas highlight the need for a wider mine risk education programs covering all the country, not just parts of it, as it was the case last year.

Mr. Co-chair,

To conclude, we would like to appeal to all our partners to continue helping us reduce the levels of human suffering that still affects more than a million of Mozambicans, by channelling their generous support in the priorities and activities highlighted above.

Let me close by thanking all our partners who have been supportive to the Government efforts in dealing with demining activities in Mozambique. Your support is highly appreciated by the Mozambican people and we all stand ready to continue working with you in the pursuance of the main humanitarian goals of the Convention.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.