



Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Article 5: Clearing Mined Areas

Presented

By

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Mission of Afghanistan, Geneva

Standing Committee of the Meeting of the State Parties to  
the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and  
Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

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*Excellencies,  
Distinguished colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Good morning/ afternoon.

As one of the world's most heavily impacted countries in the world, Afghanistan has suffered for a long time the loss of lives and livelihoods caused by landmines and I am sad to say that this continues to this day. However, we are determined to not become tired of reaching our desired end state of a country which is free from the impact of anti-personnel mines. Despite the scale of the task, we can truly say that the end is now in sight.

There has been an immense amount of work carried out over the last twenty years by the implementing partners of the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan and to them I am deeply thankful.

In the last year alone, according to the Afghan calendar, the implementing partners have cleared or cancelled over ninety three sq km of minefield, destroying seven hundred and twenty anti-tank mines, more than sixty-four thousand anti-personnel mines and over one hundred and ninety thousand other explosive remnants of war.

A development in recent months has been ongoing work to ensure we have an accurate and up-to-date picture of the remaining hazard. This has included the completion of a Polygon survey exercise, the most significant survey of landmine contamination in the country since the Landmine Impact Survey in 2005, which has redefined former suspected hazardous areas into specific minefields. We have also updated to the latest database – IMSMA<sup>NG</sup> – becoming one the largest programmes to be using the database for all operational and planning purposes.

Both of these exercises have given us a much clearer picture of the remaining contamination.

According to this updated national database, we have 657 sq km of remaining contaminated land, comprised of 6,684 minefields and impacting over 2,000 communities. Our progress towards achieving the Ottawa Compact is 43% in terms of the number of hazards cleared and 47% in terms of hazardous area.

In terms of strategy and planning, we have published our Integrated Operational Framework for the Afghan year 1389, which began in March of this year. We have copies available here and on the MACCA's website. Here you can read the detail of the Government's end-states, vision and strategy as well as the aspirational plans of all implementing partners to be carried out in the next year.

As for challenges remaining, these are both technical, financial and practical.

On a technical front, we have some very large areas of contaminated land which is not appropriate for clearance using the current assets available to us. We are very interested in hearing from anyone who is able to help us address this.

Financially, although we are extremely grateful for the support of our committed donors over the years, like many other countries with significant contamination, the programme is chronically underfunded to be able to reach the goals of the Ottawa Treaty.

Practically, we do have the added challenge of ongoing conflict in the South, which impacts us both in terms of access and ensuring our humanitarian neutrality is maintained and deminers are not viewed as a party to the conflict, but neutral peacemakers and life-savers.

However, we do not see any of the above challenges as insurmountable and have all the vision and energy required to meet them. I call on you to support us and join us in our journey towards the end state of an Afghanistan free from the impact of mines.

Thank you.