

**Statement of the Thai Delegation  
on Mine Clearance  
at the Meetings of the Standing Committee of the Mine Ban Convention,  
Geneva, 8-10 May 2006**

-----

Co-Chairs,  
Friends and Colleagues,

It is an honour for me to share with you some details concerning the ongoing efforts in Thailand to meet the challenges regarding Mine Clearance and Mine Risk Education over the last six months, ever since the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the State Parties in Zagreb last year.

*[progress]*

First of all, allow me to provide an update on the statistics regarding mine clearance in Thailand. In 2005, a total of 5,874,667 sq.m. of land was cleared by the Thailand Mine Action Center (TMAC), the General Chatichai Choonhavan Foundation (GCCF), and the Japan Alliance for Humanitarian Demining Support (JAHDS). As you can see, this is a much greater accomplishment, compared to the 2,011,210 sq.m. in 2004. Since the 6MSP, a total of 291,148 sq.m. of mine-contaminated areas have been cleared and returned to the community. Therefore, the total area that has been demined since Thailand became a party to the Convention in 1999 has reached 9.34 sq. km.

Most of the work is mainly concentrated along the border between Thailand and Cambodia which, according to the Impact Survey Level I, has been highly affected by landmines. Today, most of the former mined fields are currently used for agricultural purposes. Many villagers have relocated and settled into this demined land. They have resumed their daily lives, while essential infrastructure such as roads, markets and tourist sites have been developed. We are confident that the pace of mine clearance would proceed at a greater pace than in the past due to the increasing expertise in demining as well as more effective techniques and equipment for technical survey.

*[problems]*

Nevertheless, if one looks into Thailand's mine clearance timeline under Article 5 of the Convention, which is only 3 years from now, the

mentioned figure might appear somewhat unsatisfactory. Meeting this obligation is a great challenge for Thailand. As you all know, clearing mines is a costly, complicated, and time-consuming process. We therefore urge the State Parties to look into the implementation of Thailand's Article 5 obligation with a realistic and pragmatic approach.

Co-Chairs,  
*[plan]*

At the 6MSP, Thailand reported that TMAC had completed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Master Plan of the Thailand Humanitarian Mine Action 2005-2009 as the framework of mine action in the country. The Master Plan touches upon the problem regarding data of mine-contaminated areas contained in the Level I Impact Survey. It also proposes the area reduction technique as one of the strategies to stimulate mine clearance. Pending approval by the National Committee on Humanitarian Mine Action, TMAC has already pursued the implementation process along the lines of this Master Plan.

Thailand places an emphasis on two approaches in order to enhance our mine clearance capacity to reach a more realistic and achievable target in accordance with our obligations under Article 5.

Firstly, we need to take concrete steps in implementing the Technical Survey or Impact Survey Level II for the remaining unreleased land, especially the Dangerous Area (DA). Through this survey, we hope that we would be able to acquire more specific and precise data regarding mined areas. This, in turn, would enable us to proceed with marking and fencing. It would facilitate the planning process by breaking down mined areas into manageable projects with an earmarked budget and specific timeframe.

It should be noted here that, while maintaining normal clearance operations, TMAC started using the area reduction method in 2005, which is a mixture of random checking of suspected areas and using a database on area utilization during the last 5-10 years. This method has been introduced and implemented by Humanitarian Units 3 and 4, which are located near the borders with Cambodia and Laos, respectively. We also anticipate that most of the remaining suspected land would be unused and non-permitted areas, such as

National Parks, which may not affect the living conditions of local people in the villages close by.

Secondly, we believe that it is necessary to stimulate public awareness in order to promote a more cohesive and concrete partnership among government agencies, NGOs and the private sector. Greater and more active involvement by the public and private sectors is crucial to the success of mine action.

In this connection, Thailand has initiated a series of activities to raise public awareness, as well as to explore opportunities for cooperation and assistance on mine clearance among Thai public and private enterprises. Recently, a number of articles and news reports have been published in various well-known local newspapers regarding mine action in Thailand -- its problems and challenges. In particular, on 7 April 2006, one of the country's most well-known and popular television programmes broadcasted a documentary on mine action in Thailand.

On that same day, we also jointly organized some events in observance of the United Nations' International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action to increase public understanding and awareness, as well as to explore possible participation and support from the private sector. During that event, TMAC proposed some pilot projects on mine clearance and mine risk education, namely marking and fencing, for additional financial support. We expect that, through these activities, greater awareness and understanding of the landmine problem would be disseminated and contribute to more active involvement of the private sector.

It should also be noted here that Thailand is in the process of restructuring TMAC into a more dynamic and independent entity. Through this new structure, it is expected that TMAC's allocated budget as well as staff would be increased and, as a consequence, the mine action would be accelerated.

On the international front, Thailand plans to cooperate with relevant supporters within the regional and international frameworks, such as the Japan-

ASEAN Integration Fund, and the 14-member Human Security Network, to establish practical cooperation on landmines. Thailand and Cambodia have also agreed during the Joint Committee meeting in February 2006 to jointly conduct a feasibility study on mine clearance in prioritized mine-suspected areas along the border between the two countries. We expect that such cooperation would enhance the mine clearance process in Thailand as well as in other countries in the region.

Thailand has also worked closely with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) on mine clearance. The workshop on *Assisting Thailand in meeting expectations in implementing Article 5 of the Convention* was jointly organized with the participation of experts from GICHD in April 2006. The main purpose of this workshop was to increase the awareness of all parties regarding their obligations under the Convention as well as to enhance Thailand's planning process with more pragmatic approaches for achieving progress on mine clearance. This workshop will be a meaningful step for Thailand to complete our planning process of the Technical Survey Level 2.

As some of you may know, Thailand is the current Chair of the Human Security Network, and the landmine issue has been placed on the agenda of the 8<sup>th</sup> HSN Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok on 1-2 June 2006. We hope that, apart from promoting universalization of the Mine Ban Convention, the discussion would also forge greater concrete cooperation among HSN member countries in supporting implementation regarding landmines.

Co-Chairs,  
Friends and Colleagues,

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm Thailand's continued commitment to mobilize all possible ways and means to fulfill our obligations under Article 5 of the Convention. We are confident that additional assistance and support from our friends and like-minded countries, in all forms, would be an essential part of this endeavour. This especially applies to technical assistance, additional financial contributions as well as necessary equipment.

At this point of time, Thailand believes that the “3Ps”-- partnership, participation and policy planning -- are vital elements to enable Thailand to surmount the challenges facing us. Continued support from, and partnership with, our friends and the international community are also essential factors for us in moving towards the realization of our goal.

Thank you.

-----