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**ZIMAC UPDATE AT THE TWELFTH MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES
(12 MSP)-: GENEVA SWITZERLAND ON 03 DECEMBER 2012 BY
DIRECTOR ZIMAC**

INTRODUCTION

1. Mr President allow me to extend our congratulations on your election as President of the 12th Meeting of State Parties. We would also want to thank the assessment group for the assistance and guidance they rendered in the improvement of our extension request. Mr President, Zimbabwe has remained resolute in her endeavours to fulfil her obligations under Article 5. As you may be aware, Zimbabwe's landmine problem dates back from 1975 to 1979 during the height of the war of the liberation struggle. The Rhodesian forces laid antipersonnel mines in the country's borders to prevent the infiltration of freedom fighters from neighbouring countries. Mines were laid on six distinct minefields with a contamination of 511,05 km².

CURRENT EFFORTS

2. Since 1980 to date an area of 305,2km² was cleared remaining with a contamination level of 205.85km². Major demining clearance operations commenced in 1998 with the United States of America providing initial training, material and financial assistance. This resulted in the partial clearance of the Victoria Falls to Mlibizi minefield. The support was discontinued after one and half years leaving Zimbabwe to complete the bulk of clearance of the 286km² minefield on its own in 2005.

3. Further assistance was provided by the European Union between 1999 and 2000 to demine the 145km² Musengezi to Rwenya minefield. This support was withdrawn when only 6.2km² was cleared. Since then no financial assistance was provided to Zimbabwe to clear its minefields.

4. Zimbabwe's initial 10 years deadline for fulfilling its mine clearance obligation under the Convention for the Prohibition of The Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mine and their Destruction expired in March 2009. Zimbabwe requested for 22 months in order to carry out survey work to acquire a more accurate presentation of the dimensions of mined areas that need to be addressed. This extension was granted in 2009 at the Nineth Meeting of the State Parties (9th MSP). Unfortunately due to lack of funding and the illegal sanctions imposed on her, Zimbabwe was not able to accomplish the survey work it intended to carry out during the extension period.

5. Due to failure to accomplish the first extension request, Zimbabwe submitted a second extension request of a period of 24 months which was granted at the Tenth Meeting of the State Parties. Over the course of this extension period not much was achieved again due to lack of international support. However the clearance of Sango Border Post to Crooks Corner minefield is still ongoing since 2006.

6. During this second extension period Zimbabwe managed to send clearance proposal to a number of International organisations to provide assistance to Zimbabwe in survey and major clearance operation. Among the organisations that responded are the HALO Trust, the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which voluntarily came to assist the Government of Zimbabwe. Our Government has already signed Memorandum of Understanding with these organisations which we believe is a milestone achievement during this second extension period which expires in January 2013. Since signing of the MOU, the ICRC has provided demining equipment, provision of trauma kits, training of senior officers on the IMAS, training of instructors for demining and survey, facilitated the training of trauma medics and provision of trauma kits and training on Quality Assurance and Quality Control. It is pleasing to note that the ICRC has promised to continue supporting ZIMAC in 2013.

7. HALO Trust and Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA) are already establishing themselves in Zimbabwe so as to start survey and major clearance operations in 2013. HALO Trust is in the process of being registered as an NGO in Zimbabwe and is preparing to start survey in 2013. NPA has already established offices in the area close to the minefields they were allocated and will also commence survey early 2013. Both organisations were introduced to local authorities in their area of responsibility. I am happy to inform you that the coming in of these organisations will go a long way in enhancing achievements of the 3rd extension requirement.

8. Zimbabwe had submitted a third extension request to carryout survey on its mined areas and then come out with a detailed clearance plan. The extension request was drafted with the assistance from Mr Ruan Juan Carlos from the Implementation Support Unit and also in consultation with stakeholders like HALO Trust and Norwegian Peoples Aid. We hope Zimbabwe will be granted the third Extension request which will culminate into the survey and major clearance operations.

9. Joint Demining. As earlier alluded to by our colleague's from Mozambique ZIMAC is engaged in negotiations with IND in order to jointly tackle the demining of the common border between Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The two parties are still working on the finer details of how this can be done. Work on the proposed area

will commence once this process has been completed and we hope this will help us in meeting our obligations speedily.

CONCLUSION

10. In a nutshell, I am happy to say that there have been very positive developments in as far as mine action in Zimbabwe is concerned. The dream of seeing Zimbabwe free of mines is fast becoming a reality and it is very encouraging. With evidence of international support, we lobby for Zimbabwe to be granted a further 24 months extension period to enable her carry out survey and produce a detailed plan for major clearance operations.

Let me sum up by saying Zimbabwe welcomes any form of mine action support/ assistance and remains committed to her obligations under Article 5 which is aimed at ensuring a mine free Zimbabwe and the world at large.

Thank you Mr President