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**Intervention by the Delegation of Thailand
during the Consideration of the General Status and Operation of the
Convention: National updates on Article 5 implementation
at the 12th Meeting of the States Parties to Mine Ban Convention
Wednesday, 5 December 2012**

(Please check against delivery)

Thank you, Mr. President,

It is my pleasure to take the floor to share with you our progress made on Article 5 implementation as well as assessment on our determined effort to apply the relevant Cartagena action plans at its mid-term point as follows;

Let me begin with the Action # 15 regarding methods to expedite releasing land. The recent development in this area is the full-scale implementation of the Land Release method. After the incorporation of the Land Release standard and guideline into our National Mine Action Standards in 2011, technical trainings on Land Release with all of the four Humanitarian Mine Action Units (HMAUs) have been carried out throughout the first half of 2012. At the same time, we have been conducting a series of four workshops on land release with the local communities aiming to engage them into the land release process in accordance with the Action # 20. This parallel process prompted the Thailand Mine Action Center (TMAC) to implement the Land Release method at full scale for the first time.

The introduction of this new method has doubled the speed of mine clearance in terms of the cleared area during the first half of this year. I am pleased to share that, during October 2011 to September 2012, Thailand has released confirmed hazardous areas of around 16,744,938 square meters (16.7 square kms.), with 596,417 square meters (0.6 square kms.) by manual clearance method and 16,148,543 square meters (16.1 square kms.) by the Land Release method. Of all the cleared area by the Land Release method, 6,599,101 square meters (6.6 square kms.) were released through non-technical survey, while 9,564,442 square meters (9.5 square kms.) were released through technical survey. Moreover, 7,949,193 square meters (7.9 square kms.) have passed quality control procedures and have been handed over to the local authorities. This effort resulted in a reduction in Thailand's total contaminated area to 529,607,841 square meters (529.6 square kms.) The number of released area which is almost twice as much as the total number we have achieved last year has

prompted us to double the target for the next year mine clearance to 23,000,000 square meters.

Moreover, following a successful implementation of the Land Release method, Thailand has reviewed the national mine action strategy in accordance with the Action # 16. The revised strategy contains the new timeframe which is divided into three main phases. Each phase reflects different combinations between technical and non-technical methods intended to be employed. In short, we plan to intensively apply more non-technical method from now on until 2015, in order to identify the area remained to be released using a manual demining. After that we will focus on a technical and manual clearance method from 2016 until the end of the extended deadline in 2018. With this revised plan, we are confident that we are on the right track and will continue to intensify our efforts to making full use of the plan and available resources.

Mr. President,

Let me now move on to the Action # 18. Over 70 percent of mine-suspected areas remain along the border between Thailand and neighbouring countries. Thus, we reiterate our will to work closely with our neighbours to tackle this common humanitarian challenge. This year, we witnessed good progress made in cooperation between Thailand and Cambodia in implementing the International Court of Justice's Order for provisional measures of 18 July 2011 concerning Cambodia's request for interpretation of the Judgment of 15 June 1962 on the case concerning the Temple of Preah Vihear. We are pleased to share that a Joint Working Group (JWG) was established by the Thai-Cambodian General Border Committee (GBC) as the mechanism for both sides to discuss the matters concerning the implementation of the Court's Order. This year, there have been two meetings of the JWG. The main agreement resulting from those meetings is that the "redeployment" of military personnel from the PDZ will take place after the completion of the joint demining of the PDZ and that the Joint Observers Team will observe the redeployment. On 31 August 2012, a meeting between Thailand Mine Action Center and Cambodia Mine Action Centre was held in Bangkok, Thailand, to discuss the joint demining plan of the PDZ. The next JWG meeting will be held in Thailand on 17 -19 December 2012.

Mr. President,

The goal of zero-victim is still a challenge. Nevertheless, we hope that a reduction in the number of victims will continue to be the trend, reflecting the effectiveness of comprehensive mine risk education and mined area markings. In this

light, another significant progress is the training and education on mine dangers for 76 schools, 120 villages with a participation of 15,232 students, teachers, 35,956 villagers, and 1,109 communal officials, which targets the most at-risk population in the mine-affected communities. Apart from that, every year TMAC hosts activities to commemorate the International Landmine Day on 4th April. The highlight of every year activity has been a television scoop on the demining unit field operation site and the landmine victims. We hope that these programs and activities will help raise public awareness on this important issue in accordance with the Action # 19.

Mr. President,

Last but not least, Thailand wishes to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the NGOs who have been working closely to support our mine action effort. We are particularly pleased to share that the successful implementation of the Land Release method is a result of a close collaboration between TMAC and the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and the APOPO. Especially, the successful development of the National Mine Action Standard (NMAS) with the Land Release chapter included is one of the clear examples that show the relentless contributions by the NPA. Moreover, the NPA is now exploring possible options for mine detection dogs to be more efficiently used in the Land Release process which is a key methodology currently employed by our Mine Action Center.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the United States Department of Defense's Humanitarian Demining Research and Development (HD R&D) Program for its continuous technical support to our mine clearance effort. The new technologies shared by the Program, such as the machine that used for vegetation clearance and area preparation, not only contribute to ensure a safety of our deminers, but also help us overcome a problem of diverse vegetation of our mine contaminated areas which poses one of the most important impeding circumstances to our clearance process.

I thank you. Mr. President.
