

STATEMENT BY BHUTAN ON THE TWELFTH MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES (12MSP) TO
THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND
TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION
(GENEVA, 3-7 DECEMBER 2012)

Mr. President
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

1. On behalf of the Royal Government of Bhutan, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the Presidency of the 12th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. I am confident that with Your Excellency's vast experience, we will conclude our important deliberations with immense success. I would also like to place on record my delegation's appreciation to H.E. Mr. Prak Sokhonn for his contributions to this important body this past year.

Mr. President,

2. Bhutan has been actively engaged with our national stakeholders to meet our demining obligations and it is in this connection that we are pleased to report the following:
 - i. Since the submission of our Initial Transparency Report, the Royal Bhutan Army has destroyed 2,370 MNM-14 and 2,183 M-16 anti-personnel landmines. These were either unserviceable or expired.
 - ii. The minefields in Nganglam under Samdrup Jongkhar District have been cleared of all mines in the period between the 10th and 16th of July 2010. These mines were laid on five tracks covering an area of 1,360 sq. meters that consisted of 41 M-16 mines. These areas are now clear of mines and are safe for the free movement of people and animals.
 - iii. Presently, there are only three locations containing mines in Gobarkunda under Zhemgang District with a total of 50 MNM-14 mines and 12 M-16 mines. These three locations constitute a total area of 4,030 sq. meters. The three areas have been fenced between 3rd and 8th of March 2012 and notice boards installed so that the people are appropriately alerted and the areas contained.

The Royal Bhutan Army has not yet been able to remove the mines in these locations as these are heavily forested areas with thick vegetation. Moreover, the fact that some of the mines may have shifted from their original position due to heavy monsoon rains has hindered our demining efforts. Nevertheless, we are exploring ways to demine this area by using the Charge Line Mine Clearing (CLMC) method. We are hopeful that these minefields can be cleared by the winters of 2012-13.

- iv. The total number of mines retained by the Royal Bhutan Army is **490**, of which **245** is the MNM-14 and **245** the M-16 mines. These have been retained solely for the purposes of training. The number of mines retained is exclusive of the mines in Goburkunda.
- v. The Royal Bhutan Army conducts a weeklong training for its officers and troops every year. All officers and troops are given a basic mine laying and clearing training and few are sent for specialized training in mine clearing and removal of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED).

Mr. President,

3. I am happy to also report that in keeping with our commitment to international peace and security as a responsible member of the United Nations, Bhutan cleared minefields that were located in Manas under Zhemgang District, even before we became a party to this Convention. These minefields consisted of **170** MNM-14 and **45** M-16 mines that covered an area of 30,000 sq. meters. The demining activity was carried out between 31st January and 4th February in 2005.

Mr. President,

4. In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Bhutan does not have any other mined areas other than the previously mentioned locations in Gobarkunda. The Royal Government is confident that we will be able to fulfill our obligations under Article 5 of the Convention within the stated deadline of 2016.
5. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you embark on a yearlong journey of further championing this Convention. I would also like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the principles and objectives of this Convention and to convey my appreciation to the Implementing Support Unit for their support and cooperation.

Thank you and Tashi Delek.