

STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE 11TH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE AP MINE BAN CONVENTION, 2 TO 5 DECEMBER 2013

MINE CLEARANCE

(Check against delivery)

Mr President

My delegation would like to commend you for the excellent manner you have presided over the work of the 13MSP.

Mr President

A number of areas are still contaminated by landmines and other explosive remnants of war. This contamination results not only to deaths and injuries but a wide range of social and economic impacts such as blocked access to water sources, blocked arable land resulting in increased food insecurity, reduced household earnings, delayed repair of damaged infrastructure, isolation of communities, increased healthcare costs for individuals and delayed or dangerous return for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees after conflict.

In this connection, we are also concerned that a number of States Parties could not meet their clearance deadlines and consequently requested extensions. The slow pace of clearance hinders reconstruction and development efforts in communities that desperately require land for their developmental needs. On the other hand, we would like to congratulate Bhutan and Venezuela for reporting that they have fulfilled their mine clearance obligation as contained in Article 5, paragraph 1 of the Convention. We hope that there will be more announcements in the near future. In this regard, it is prudent that the affected States draw up their clearance plans as soon as they join the Convention. In addition, we believe that the allocation of adequate resources will go a long way in addressing these problems.

Mr President

We would like to encourage affected States to engage in cooperation and assistance activities in order to clear all contaminated areas in their territories. States should work together internationally, regionally and sub-regional levels to fulfil obligations of the Convention. This can be done through exchange of information, technical expertise, equipment and experience. This means that each State can make some contribution towards cooperation and assistance. Furthermore, we would like to urge the States in a position to do so to provide funding for demining projects.

This will ensure that the risk of mines towards innocent people is eliminated.

I thank you