



STATEMENT OF CAMBODIA ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION
THE 16TH MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO MINE BAN TREATY
VIENNA, AUSTRIA, 18-21 DECEMBER, 2017

Thank you very much Mr. Ambassador Thomas Hajnoczi for the floor;
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;
Distinguished Delegates,

First of all, I would like to congratulate Mr. President for great achievements that have been made under your term and would also like to express our profound thanks to the Government of Austria and the Implementation Support Unit for their good office and professional arrangements for Cambodia delegation to join the 16th Meeting of the States Parties in this charming city.

As a state party to the Mine Ban Treaty for twenty years since 1997, Cambodia has been highly committed to implement all obligations as spelled out in the Convention. Under stewardship of the convention, and through concerted efforts of all national and international operators and relevant stakeholders and with generous support from our past and current donors, many great achievements have been materialized accordingly and the Royal Government of Cambodia owe them a great deal with our heartfelt gratitude and appreciations.

Mr. President,

Cambodia continues to suffer severe socio-economic losses and catastrophic humanitarian consequences. From 1979 to 2017, Cambodia recorded 64,713 casualties, in which 81% was male, 8% female and 11% children. The casualty reached peak in 1996 about 4,320 and highly dropped down to below 100 casualties in the last two years; as of November 2017, there are 51 casualties. However, this figure is still too many.

The magnitude of landmine/ERW contamination in Cambodia is still extensive. Since a ten year extension of its deadline for the clearance of all mined areas as per Article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) was granted in 2009, Cambodia has carried out the Baseline Survey in 161 districts out of 197 districts, remaining 36 districts to be done, then Cambodia will have a complete picture of contamination throughout the country. Within 161 districts, Cambodia identified landmine/ERW contaminated land approximately 1,970 km², including approximately 971 km² of landmines contaminated land, 645 km² of Cluster Munitions and 333km² of ERW.

Cambodia has achieved major progresses from 1979 to 2017. Approximately 1,658km² of mined affected land have been released, benefiting 3,372,040 people nation-wide, and destroying in the process 1,045,730 anti-personnel mines, 24,576 anti-tank mines and 2,705,809 explosive remnants of war by our accredited national and international operators: CMAC, NPMEC, HALO Trust, MAG, NPA, CSHD and APOPO.

From 2010 to 2016, Cambodia has released an average of 143 km² per year of mine/ERW areas. Since the land release methodology has been adopted, a significant increase in land release outputs from 61km² using traditional clearance based approach in 2009 to 185km² in 2015 using mixed methods of Non-Technical Survey and Technical Survey and Full Clearance. According to the last 6 year period land release output data, contaminated land released through Non-Technical Survey and Technical Survey in average is ranging from 30%-50%.

The released land has produced a variety of socio-economic benefits. According to the consolidated Post Clearing Monitoring report (PCM 2010-2017), 60% of released land was used for agriculture activities; 30% was used for physical infrastructure and 7% for housing of the affected communities. Only 3% of released land has yet to be put to use at time of PCM.

The Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) coordinates MRE activities and strengthens the provision of mine risk messages to target groups. MRE is provided by a large range of accredited mine operators, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and a number of NGOs. Risk education messages and educational materials, including T-shirts, posters, books containing risk educational messages and telephone contacts for Police and operators, have been developed to facilitate reporting when people notice the presence of mine/ERW.

Beside above achievements, in implementing the article 5, we have achieved key milestones as mentioned in our extension request document. We developed the Cambodian Mine Action Standard 14 on BLS and 15 on Land Release; National Mine Action Strategy (NMAAS 2018-2025) has been developed and it serves as a roadmap to gauge the sector activities and outlines specific Goals and Objectives to achieve our mission, which is “to release all known landmine and prioritized cluster munitions contaminated areas, and to minimize the residual risks caused by explosive remnants of war in Cambodia; and to advocate the rights and services for landmine and ERW survivors and indirect victims”. We also enhanced existing planning and prioritization system to incorporate the use of BLS findings and BLS now becomes one of key landmine prioritization criteria.

Even though clearance along the border is still complex, Cambodia is committed to address this issue on regular and adhoc basis through existing mechanism, that is General Border Commission (GBC) and Joint Border Commission (JBC).

Mr. President,

The nature of contamination is greatly complex. Mine clearance in Cambodia is facing financial and operational challenges and limitations as follows.

Clearance resource plummeted more than 50%, while Cambodia was intensifying our capacity to hit the higher target around 214km² in annual clearance output. In addition, funding to carry out further the baseline survey and Non-Technical Survey was scarce and this activity is crucial for Cambodia to identify and release the known and suspected minefields throughout the country at timely manner.

Meanwhile, there are a lot of factors that constrain the clearance operation to move smoothly, effectively and productively. Climate condition and change (6 months rain and 6 months hot), complex geographical terrains and conditions (forested, roots, leeches, sharp slopes) prompted our clearance to relocate and slowed down the process and speed of mine clearance. It is also worthwhile to note that the complex terrain coupled with reduced support to external quality management of the National Authority caused several accidents to our deminers in 2017, more than ever before.

Mr. President,

Cambodia's Article 5 deadline of 1 January 2020 is rapidly approaching. Given the enormity of the remaining challenge we have determined that we may not be in a position to declare completion by this date. In light of this, Cambodia has begun working with its partners to develop a detailed request for extension which will contain a detailed completion plan of its Article 5 obligation.

Cambodia remains committed to the implementation of this core objective of the Convention and, with the help of our partners, aims to achieve the aim of a mine free Cambodia as soon as possible. Cambodia also remains committed to the declaration of Maputo to ensure implementation of the Convention's obligations by 2025.

Meanwhile, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RCG) continues to prioritize mine action sector, clearly spelled out in the top government policy and development strategy, especially in the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goal 18th. RGC has been committed both in kind and cash contributions to mine action sector. RGC has been supporting a wide range of mine action activities ranging from administration cost, MRE, Victim Assistance, Planning and Prioritization, to mine clearance linking infrastructure development and general mine clearance operation cost, which has been earmarked under national budget in the last three years.

Last of all, I would like to express our sincerest gratitude to all donors for their continuing generous support to mine action in Cambodia namely China, Japan, Australia, Switzerland, United States of America, Germany, Austria, Norway, Canada, United Kingdom, and UNDP. I am proud to say that Cambodia have already had extensive experience, know-how, capacity and all management systems in mine action in place, so what we mainly require is increasing financial support. Taking this opportunity, I wish to appeal to the current and potential donors to continue and provide further financial support to let Cambodia finish the job by 2025. Thank you.