

**ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION
16th MEETING OF STATES PARTIES
18-21 DECEMBER 2017**

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

STATEMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 5

1. As this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor, I wish to thank you for all the hard work that has been put into the organisation of this meeting, and to express our appreciation to the ISU and the Committees for enabling our discussions. The UK takes its national obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention seriously, and remains dedicated to the Convention's humanitarian goals. I thank you for this opportunity to provide an update on the UK's actions to implement clearance of the mined areas in the Falkland Islands.
2. The UK has demonstrated its commitment to demining the Falkland Islands through five phases of demining since 2009. Last year, on 14 September 2016, the UK announced the commitment of a further £20m of funding to continue the removal of anti-personnel mines from the Falkland Islands. This funding is for Phase Five, which represents a significant acceleration in the UK's demining efforts.
3. Phase Five began in October 2016 and I am pleased to report that it is advancing strongly. So far, under Phase Five, 35 mined areas, totalling over 3.6 million square metres of land have been cleared and over 2,600 anti-personnel mines have been destroyed. Technical surveys have been completed in 21 of the planned 27 minefields. Technical survey work is a vital aid to the development of a more accurate picture of the clearance challenges that remain. We expect this Phase to clear at least 46 minefields.
4. The previous four phases of demining in the Falkland Islands were carried out between October 2009 and March 2016. During this six year period, 35 mined areas were released, and 4,371 anti-personnel mines were destroyed. Consequently, with the addition of the work completed thus far in Phase Five, the UK's demining efforts in the Falkland Islands have seen 10.6 million square metres of mined areas cleared and nearly 7,000 anti-personnel mines destroyed.
5. I would like to note that the UK considers the Falkland Islands to be 'mine-impact free'. Most of the remaining mined areas are in remote locations, and pose negligible risk to civilians. Nonetheless, in all phases of demining, safety is paramount – the safety of deminers during operations, the safety of the Falkland Islands' inhabitants, and of the land returned to the community. Environmental and community issues are also a high priority, and we seek to cause as little disruption to local residents and wildlife as possible. All demining projects are conducted in close cooperation with the Falkland Islands Government.
6. The UK's priority is to ensure Phase Five runs smoothly and effectively. It encompasses the most complex and demanding activity of the project so far, including both de-mining

and the clearance of other Explosive Remnants of War from mined areas. A vital element of this Phase is to ensure that activity provides the necessary technical details to develop an accurate picture of the remaining mine clearance challenges. This will enable the UK to work towards fully clearing the mines, and to keep the Convention apprised of progress and forecasts.

7. Looking ahead, the UK is required under Article 5 to destroy all anti-personnel mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 March 2019. The UK is fully cognisant of this fact and has worked hard towards meeting this commitment, as demonstrated by the five phases of demining over the past eight years. These Phases represent significant activity and a significant financial undertaking. However, the complexity of the task should not be underestimated; meeting the UK's 2019 target will remain challenging.
8. The Falkland Islands continue to pose a unique challenge. Challenges include the remote location, the adverse weather conditions (for example, enforcing an annual three month stand down in the winter) and the capacity limits of the Islands, such as for medical evacuation, and facilities for accommodation. Furthermore, factors including the environmental consequences of demining, the fact that some minefields never had minefield records, and the tough financial climate are all aspects which the UK contends with in taking forward this work.
9. These factors are becoming increasingly significant as we tackle the more remote, technically-challenging and environmentally-sensitive minefields in Phase Five. For these reasons, we judge that it is likely that we will need to request an extension next year to enable the UK to complete the demining of the Falkland Islands. The UK does not take such a consideration lightly, but instead as a significant demonstration of our commitment to the Falkland Islands and its inhabitants, to the Convention itself, and to affirm the important aspiration of a mine-free world.
10. The UK remains committed to transparency with regards to all its obligations under the Convention. We will continue to update the Committee via our annual transparency reports and through our national statements at intersessional meetings and annual Meetings of States Parties; and via close cooperation with the ISU and the Article 5 Committee next year. The previous four phases of demining have made good progress, and we look forward to continuing and completing the successful implementation of Phase Five.

Thank you.