



## **ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN**

### **Afghanistan's Statement on Clearance (Article five of the APMBC)**

*17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention*

*26 – 30 November 2018*

*Geneva, Switzerland*

*Excellencies,*

*Distinguished Colleagues,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

On behalf of the Afghan delegation, I am honoured to present Afghanistan's achievements and challenges in fulfilling its commitments under Article Five of the Convention.

Afghanistan remains one of the most heavily contaminated countries in the world. 3,451 minefields, covering 687 square kilometres remain contaminated and continue to affect 1,506 communities, 254 districts, in 33 out of 34 provinces of the country.

In addition, remnants of the ongoing armed conflicts add to scale of contamination though the actual extent of new contamination is not yet fully determined. This having been said, we know that on average some 134 Afghan civilians lose their lives or get injured by landmines and ERW every month, which is one of the highest casualty rates in the world. It is worth mentioning that around 54 % of the civilian accidents are caused by improvised mines, 44% by ERW and some 2% by legacy landmines. Sadly, children comprise 58 percent of civilian casualties caused by mines and ERW.

Unfortunately, improvised mines are still used by anti-government elements as a weapon of choice and these devices are posing a serious threat to the lives of civilians. To address this issue, a committee has been established to develop the standards, policies and procedures required for survey and clearance of improvised mines based on humanitarian principles. The national policy on survey and clearance of improvised mines is already in place and the committee is now drafting the national standards on survey and clearance of improvised mines. Aligned with this effort, one of the MAPA implementing partners (IPs) started to deliver training to their staff in IM removal and we are planning to conduct a Non-Technical Survey in some 10 districts contaminated by IMs in the near future. It is notable that the Afghan National Security Forces also, in a larger scale, remove the Improvised Explosive Devices.

Afghanistan has a detailed work plan to achieve mine-free status by 2023. We are now into the sixth year of the Extension Work Plan. Although we achieved the clearance target for the first year, 2013, achievements respectively were only 69.8% of the target for year two, 60% for year three, 54% for year 4, and 34% for year 5. The reasons for not achieving the clearance target was funding shortfall and continually adding the remaining uncleared balance of the previous years to subsequent years.

Looking at the funding status for 2018, it is clear that we will not be able to meet our annual targets. As an example, MAPA's funding target for 2018 is USD 99 million, of which USD 51 million has so far been secured. This is approximately 52% of our funding target for 2018. Given that we are approaching the end of the year, our funding target is unlikely achieved in 2018. Connected to this, neither will be our clearance target.

To overcome this challenge, we work hard to keep MAPA not just highly effective, but also cost-efficient, delivering positive value for money in what is recognised as one the most difficult operating environments in the world.

On a final note, on behalf of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, I would like to express our gratitude for the contributions of all donors and partners.

Thank you very much