

Statement of the

Republic of the Sudan

8th Meeting of the States Parties of
“Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,
Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel
Mines and on their Destruction”

Dead Sea (Amman), Jordan, 18-22 November 2007

Presented by:

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on behalf of the
National Mine action Authority (NMAA)

Your Royal Highness, Prince Mired Raad , distinguished delegates, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Good morning/Afternoon,

First of all allow me to extend my sincere appreciations to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for hosting this important conference and the donor community for its generous and continued support to mine action in the Sudan, to the UN for its expanding support, and all mine action organizations working in the Country.

During the past few months, Sudan has taken concrete steps in addressing the landmine/ERW contamination problem paving the way for Sudanese ownership and leadership in mine action in the Sudan.

With the necessary legislative and institutional framework in place, mine action in the Sudan continues to remain high on the national, both at the level of the Government of National Unit (GoNU) and Government of the Southern Sudan (GOSS) and both governments continued to allocate government resources to mine action. As an indicative of its long term commitment, mine action has been included in the Five Year national development strategy and mine action is one of the key proposed outcomes of the UN Development Assistance Framework currently being developed.

In compliance with Article 4 of the Ottawa Convention, the GONU destroyed the first batch of 4,488 stockpiled anti-personnel mines on 30 April 2007 in Khartoum. Plans are being made to destroy the remaining stockpiled ATM before the deadline of April 30 2008. The Sudan has drafted domestic mine action laws that are currently being reviewed by the Ministry o Justice. The domestic legislation will enhance the implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty.

The mine/ERW clearance and verification of the Babanusa-Wau railway line was successfully completed by the joint integrated national demining teams in late June 2007 and officially handed over to the Sudan Railway Corporation on 02 July 07 at Babanusa Town- South Kordofan State in a high profile ceremony. Utilizing 110 deminers with manual and mechanical mine/UXO clearance assets, the assessment, verification and clearance of the railway line was completed in a record time of three months and with very low cost in accordance with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and National Technical Standards and Guidelines (NTSGs). A total of 13 antipersonnel, 3 anti tank/vehicle and approximately 35,000 pieces of various types of explosive devices/ammunitions were found and subsequently destroyed during the clearance operations.

Another key achievement of the joint integrated national demining teams was the clearance of four key roads in Kassal state with a total length of 234.7 kilometers. These roads include the road between Kassala and Hamushkuraib (170 kilometers), Kassala- Awad (23.7 kilometer), Kassal-Al-luffa (24 kilometers) and Kassala -Gulsa (17 kilometers). A total of 144 anti tank mines, 34 anti personnel mines and approximately 20,000 various types of explosive devices/ammunitions were found and subsequently destroyed during the clearance operations.

The Babanusa –Wau railway line is about 450 Km long and a strategic all seasons route linking various key locations in the central and southern parts of the country. The clearance and rehabilitation of this railway line will play a vital role in the safe and smooth return of internally displaced persons (IDPs)/refugees and movement of local population. In addition, this railway line will facilitate movement of goods and supplies required for the reconstruction and development of various other parts of the country along side the railway line. The reconstruction of the railway line has already started.

The clearance of the roads in Kassala will significantly reduce travel distances, facilitate the return of refugees from Eritrea and boost economic activities in the region. Ten communities/villages located along side these roads with approximately 30,000 populations will directly benefit from these

verified/cleared roads. For instance, the verification/clearance of the road between Kassala-Hamushkuraib will reduce the travel time from approximately 9 hours to only 3 hours.

It is worth mentioning that All the operations cost of the project were covered by the Government of the National Unity (GoNU). All the 110 national deminers and technical support staff who worked on these projects were trained and equipped by the International Mine Action Training Center (IMATC) based in Nairobi with funds from the Government of UK. The US Department of State has provided one million US dollars to provide additional equipment and technical assistance to this project. UNDP Sudan provided technical assistance and advisory support to the field deployment of these deminers.

This project is considered an example of using mine action as means of trust, confidence, and peace building and cooperation between the former warring parties particularly in the field of the collecting and exchanging information on the location of mined/suspected areas. Both sides are committed to expand the cooperation in this area as 120 additional deminers jointly provided by both sides are being trained by the IMATC with funds from the Government of the UK.

As part of the National Mine Action Strategic Framework, a transition plan to facilitate the transition of the management of mine action from UN to national authorities is being developed in close coordination and cooperation with all stakeholders and players. A number of initial steps have been taken in this regard.

With support from the United Nations agencies and national and international mine action organizations, at the end of July 2007 of the 2,319 dangerous areas identified through survey activities, 952 have been cleared. A total of 24.3 million square meters of high priority land has been cleared/verified and released for productive use. Route assessment and clearance has opened up more than 20,700 km of road across Sudan for public use. A total of 4,734 anti-personnel mines and 2,172 anti-tank mines have been destroyed, in addition to 922,265 unexploded ordnance (UXO) and small arms ammunition.

Socio-economic rehabilitation and re-integration of landmine/ERW victims has been high on the national agenda. The Sudan has signed the "Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities". The VA has been integrated into the social welfare system of the country. With the generous contribution of 1.7 Million US Dollars from the Government of Japan through the UN, a Victim Assistance National Strategic Framework has been developed and approved. As part of this project, several community based projects are being implemented by UNDP, UNMAS, and UNICEF for the Socio-economic rehabilitation and re-integration of landmine/ERW victims.

Our near future priorities include the comprehensive specialized training of the recently recruited staff of national authorities in various fields, sustaining and expansion of the national mine/ERW clearance assets, completion of stockpile destruction, and increased resource mobilizations efforts.

Working together with our donors and partners, a lot has been achieved over the past 3-4 years. However, we have a long way ahead of us in addressing the landmine/ERRW contamination problem in the Sudan. Therefore, I would like to appeal to our donor community and the concerned UN agencies to increase their technical and financial support to the Sudan in building sustainable national mine action capacities to deal with the landmine/ERW problem in the long term. We strongly believe that building local and national managerial and operations capacities is the only long term solution to address the landmine/ERW contamination problem in the Sudan.

On behalf of the government and the people of the Republic of the Sudan, I would like to avail this opportunity to once again extend my sincere appreciations to the donor community, the UN, and all mine action organizations in the Sudan for their continued support and cooperation in addressing the landmine/ERW contamination problem in the Sudan.

Thank you,