

**Statement**

**By**

**H.E. Mr. Sihasak Phuangketkeow**

**Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand**

**to the United Nations Office in Geneva,**

**At the 8th Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on  
the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer**

**of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction,  
(Agenda item 11 (c), Clearing Mined Areas)**

**Dead Sea, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan,**

**18-22 November 2007**

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Your Royal Highness,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the Thai delegation is taking the floor for the first time, may I, first of all, warmly congratulate Your Royal Highness on your assuming the Presidency of this 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention (8 MSP). Your Royal Highness' strong personal commitment to and active engagement in our common cause makes us fully confident in the success of our common endeavours under the Convention. We also deeply appreciate the warm and generous hospitality extended to us by the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Your Royal Highness,

As we mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mine Ban Convention, there is indeed much that have been achieved, but of course, many challenges remain. This occasion provides us with a timely opportunity to assess the progress we have made and to find ways to overcome the challenges we face. In this spirit, I am pleased to update you on some of the progress Thailand has achieved as well as our shortcomings as we endeavour to move forward, especially in the area of mine clearance.

We believe that while the universalization of the Convention is of great importance, as we look ahead, more focus should be placed on its actual implementation. Stockpile destruction, victim assistance and demining are the three pillars of equal importance and should be considered in total. Indeed, the real measure of progress in the implementation of the Mine Ban Convention ultimately lies in the number of lives that we can save from this deadly weapon.

From an overall perspective, Thailand, like many other countries, has had our successes. Still, many challenges remain to be addressed.

We have been able to destroy our stockpiles within the timeframe stipulated by the Convention.

We have made progress on victim assistance as evidenced by a steady decrease in the number of landmine casualties and the increased access to medical treatment, care and rehabilitation for all landmine victims.

However, as in the case of several other countries, our main challenge is on mine clearance. Thailand is among the first group of mine-affected countries facing the deadline of 2009. Admittedly, our progress has been slower than anticipated. Nevertheless, we have gained valuable experience and the lessons learnt have placed us in a better position to reach our goal more effectively. With the deadline approaching, we are redoubling our efforts and are even more determined to fulfill our Article 5 obligation, and, in this regard, a number of measures have been undertaken.

At the policy level, the National Committee on Humanitarian Mine Action, chaired by the Prime Minister, has been reinvigorated as the focal point among all relevant national agencies. The Sub-committees on Mine Clearance and on Mine Risk Education have been reactivated, thus strengthening coordination amongst all concerned implementing agencies. Our efforts have also been mainstreamed into the National Economic and Social Development Plan 2007-2011 in order that they be given due priority in the context of our overall national development.

Thailand's commitment at the policy level is coupled by the increased budget allocated for mine clearance, which has more than doubled in the past few years.

At the operational level, since we started mine clearance operation 8 years ago, we have steadily increased mine-free areas. However, the fact is that the percentage is still small and the pace has been slower than we expected.

In order to facilitate a redoubling of our effort, we have started area reduction survey with supplementary funding. Once completed, Thailand will have a more accurate picture of the mine-impacted areas, which will better guide our mine clearance activities. To give an example, out of the 156.5 square kilometers which have been reinvestigated, only 25 square kilometers have proved to be mine-contaminated. This is less than 6 times of the original Level 1 Impact Survey which was carried out in 2000-2001.

On the basis of a more precise survey, we will continue to improve our national mine clearance capacity by mobilizing mainly our own resources. But to maximize our resources, we seek strengthened partnerships with neighbours and friends.

As most of Thailand's mine-affected areas are along the border, we will work with our neighbouring countries in order to maximize the benefits of our operations. Currently, Thailand is carrying out an area reduction project in the mine-

affected areas along its border with Cambodia. We are pleased that this project is funded by the Japanese Government under the framework of the Japan-ASEAN Integrated Fund. We believe that this type of cooperation with our neighbours will yield mutual benefit in terms of better mobilizing of resources and also help build confidence and promote friendship.

Your Royal Highness,

Thailand is mindful that we still have a long way to go in order to meet our mine clearance obligation. We are, at present, preparing our Article 5 extension request which will be based on a clear-cut plan and a realistic timeframe. Thailand agrees that mine clearance deadline extension should not be automatic. Yet, it should be a realistic and flexible exercise that takes into account the specific circumstances of each requesting State.

We wish to reassure you unequivocally that Thailand is determined to fulfill our obligation under Article 5 of the Convention.

There are bound to be difficulties ahead but Thailand is determined to move forward. We wish to reaffirm our unwavering commitment towards the Mine Ban Convention and to a safer world for all.

Thank you.