



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

PROGRESS ON UGANDA'S ARTICLE V REPORTING

*Statement to the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties (9MSP)
on 24th – 28th November, 2008 in Geneva.*

H. E. Ambassador Cissy Taliwaku
Deputy Permanent Representative of Uganda
to the United Nations
Geneva

Mr. President, my delegation would like to start by congratulating you on your election as the President of the 9th Meeting of States Parties. You have our full support and commitment in advancing the objectives of the Mine Ban Convention. Allow me also to express our appreciation to His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Al-Husseini, of Jordan for his able leadership and encouragement as President of the Eight Meeting of the States Parties.

Mr. President, Uganda is one of the few countries which has not requested for an extension from this august house. We remain dedicated and focused on fulfilling the commitments we made in the Mine Ban Convention. The Government of Uganda with the support of UNDP and other mine action partners in the country have employed all possible resources in its disposal towards meeting its treaty obligations. Currently, Uganda is well on track on achieving compliance towards its commitment to the Ottawa Mine Ban Convention and has heightened its engagement within mine action by playing an active role in a coalition to ban the use of cluster munitions. Uganda was indeed honoured and privileged to have hosted the African Regional Conference on the Convention on Cluster Munition which committed African States to an Action Plan in signing and ratifying the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The Uganda Mine Action Centre (UMAC) which was established in 2005 continues to coordinate, implement and manage the Ugandan response to the mine and UXO contamination problem in the country. In partnership with line Ministries, the Uganda Mine Action Centre has developed an integrated response involving survey, battle area clearance, explosives ordnance disposal, demining, mine risk education and victim assistance initiatives, and information management. The challenge for Uganda is predominantly of unexploded ordnance, cluster munitions, and to a certain extent landmines. Completed mine action assessments have proved that the threat from mines is limited in Uganda and that mines do not pose an impediment to the return and resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Mr. President, previous reports indicate that there is a suspected mined area on Uganda's border with Sudan. As a Government committed to the Ottawa Treaty and in the spirit of transparency, the National Mine Action Steering Committee has approved the immediate deployment of survey teams to conduct a general mine action assessment and technical survey of the area. As I speak, the survey teams, supported by the Danish Demining Group, have completed the general mine action assessment and has commenced with the technical survey of the area.

We have also established a Regional Mine Action Centre (RMAC) in Northern Uganda and moved the operations command and field coordination closer to the affected areas. This has enabled a more effective supervision and tasking for the demining and clearance capacity, heightened information sharing, and improved coordination with affected local communities.

That said, the declaration of completion is soon at hand and will be made well in time before the August 2009 deadline. There are no foreseen factors to deter the achievement of this objective although we are keenly aware that battle area clearance work, as well as, the delivery of Mine Risk Education and Victim Assistance activities

needs to continue uninterrupted for years to come under the coordination of the Uganda Mine Action Centre.

In this regard, we request our development partners to continue to provide financial support to Uganda especially the lead up to our August 2009 deadline and beyond. The residual national clearance capacity and management of UMAC, require external financial assistance to remain operational in saving lives and facilitating the return process. External financial assistance is required for technical equipment, medical support, transport and communications.

As part of the National Execution Model, Mine Risk Education and Victim Assistance activities should be carried out by establishing projects directly under the management of UMAC/OPM and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, thereby reducing the need for international organisations involvement. As such, financial assistance is required for continuation of mine risk education and victim assistance to the ERW affected communities in the north, northeast and western Uganda.

We are also requesting for GICHD external validation on Uganda's compliance with Article 5, the provision of IMSMA and GIS training and software, and assistance in carrying out an ERW Impact Monitoring Assessment.

Mr. President, in closing I appeal to everyone, particularly our development partners to continue to support us and to join us come 1 August 2009 when Uganda would be granted compliance to its Article 5 commitment.

Thank you, Mr. President.