



Government of Uganda

Comments by

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Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I salute you all and warm regards from Uganda. Our delegation to the 8msp is led by Hon. Suleiman Madada, the Minister for Disability Affairs in the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development, he later make comments on the victim assistance component of Mine Action in Uganda.

The comments I am making on demining are more of additional information to what was presented in the last meeting.

There is a strong will from the Government of Uganda to fulfil its Article 5 obligations by August 2009.

Demining Capacity

- By March 2008 we will have the planned residual demining capacity of twelve multi purpose demining teams and two quality control / post clearance survey teams in place.
- All demining staff is seconded from the Ministry of Defense /Uganda Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs/Uganda Police based on memoranda of understanding with the Office of The Prime Minister (OPM)
- Currently the demining capacity consists of six multi purpose demining teams and one quality control/post clearance survey team.
- The focus is to release and clear land as one of the pre requisites for safe return and resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs). The return is gaining momentum due to the progress in the peace negotiations in Juba.

Progress in Demining

- Additional 46 hazardous areas were de-mined in the districts of Gulu, Amuru, and Kasese facilitating the safe return of IDPs.
- Clearance of was completed in Lira district, the area is pending quality control

What remains to be done in mine clearance?

- Mine Action needs assessment to be conducted in the Districts of Pader, Oyam (Northern Uganda) and in Bundibugyo (Western Uganda) by March 2008. The UNDP is in the final process of contracting out this activity
- Demining of 153 identified hazardous areas in Kitgum and the remaining hazardous areas in the districts of Gulu, Amuru, Soroti and Kasese

Challenges to fulfil the Article five obligations by August 2009

- If the peace deal between the Government and the lord's resistance army is not concluded on time and worse still if a compromise is not reached
- The out standing deployment of an additional search capacity including mine detection dogs for a period of up to 18 months
- Challenges regarding environmental factors such as floods, thick vegetation and above all the difficulty in tracing where the mines are planted as there are no records available
- Challenges regarding the implementation modality for mine action in Uganda employed by the UNDP country office, which does not favor speedy implementation of planned demining operations.
- Inadequate funding.

Priorities for external assistance

- Deployment of at least two mine detection dog sets for area reduction and quality control
- Need for technical assistance to clear known mine fields in Kitgum district on the border with Southern Sudan preferable with a mechanical demining capacity.
- Increasing the demining capacity to respond faster

Article 4 obligations

- The information submitted in the last year's meeting on stock pile destruction still stand and the report on stock pile destruction carried out in 2003 still stand.
- Additionally, within the framework of the ongoing UNDP supported Small Arms and Light Weapons Project, 120 type 72 APM and 2000 ATM and 460 tonnes of ammunition were destroyed in October 2007, at Nakasongora military range by the Ministry of Defence.