



Distinguished, Co-Chairs, on behalf of the delegation of Swaziland, allow me to congratulate you in assuming your duties within the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining for its hospitality and the excellent organisation of this meeting.

It is my pleasure to give you an update on Swaziland's efforts to fulfil its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention.

This presentation has been prepared in such a way that all information requested by the Co-Chairs through the seven questions they posed will be addressed, even though not directly.

I will begin by briefly providing some background...

## Background

- During the conflict in Mozambique in the 1980s, an unknown number of AP mines were emplaced within Swaziland.
- Purportedly PMD 6 (wooden box) type mines were emplaced along the border, possibly up to a distance of 4.5 km, east of the crossing point at Namaacha, near Lomahasha.
- In 2000, Swaziland reported this as an area considered to be dangerous due to the suspected presence of mines.
- Information obtained more recently from government archives documented mine clearance activities undertaken in 1988.
- In 1988, joint efforts were undertaken by the Mozambican Army, and Swaziland's armed forces and police. 66 PMD 6 type mines, 1 mortar round and 1 POMZ type mine were removed. It is believed that all known mines were removed at the time.
- In 1999, the US military provided training assistance and warning signs were placed on existing fencing.



During the conflict in Mozambique in the 1980s, an unknown number of AP mines were emplaced within Swaziland on a short sector of Swaziland's north-eastern border with Mozambique.

Purportedly these were PMD 6 "wooden box" type mines emplaced along the border, possibly up to a distance of 4.5 kilometers east of the crossing point at Namaacha and near Lomahasha.

In 2000, Swaziland reported this as an area considered to be dangerous due to the suspected presence of mines within the area in question which is approximately 100 meters wide and 4.5 kilometers long.

A 100 meter width was specified because this area was and is already fenced for an agricultural purpose – to prevent the spread of foot and mouth disease.

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In 1999, the US military provided training assistance to the Umbutto Swaziland Defence Force (USDF) and warning signs were placed on fence of the suspected area, as can be seen on the slide.



## Implementation support visit Oct. 2006

- October 2006: ISU personnel & GICHD operations director visit Swaziland & viewed the entire area considered to be dangerous.
- Based on evidence presented a general observation was made that the area is most likely not dangerous.



Following extensive engagement between the Permanent Mission of Swaziland in Geneva and the Implementation Support Unit, in October 2006, the head of operations of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining together with ISU personnel visited Swaziland.

The purpose of the mission was to assist Swaziland in determining the exact location of the suspected mined area and if new markings were required, to assess the physical features of the area and to draw conclusions regarding methods and means to be used for area reduction and demining, as well as on reporting on efforts to fulfill Article 5 obligations.

The entire length of the area considered to be dangerous due to the suspected presence of anti-personnel mines was visited.

Based on evidence presented a general observation was made that the area in question most likely is not dangerous.

## Basis for support visit's conclusion

- There are no signs of landmines evident (e.g. craters, dead animals, mine fragments, etc.); There are no recorded casualties.
- Walking paths cross through the area in at least 10 places. In another, fence is damaged and cars likely had been driven through area.
- The Ministry of Agriculture has constructed occupied dwellings in two locations. A large area has been ploughed (to a depth of at least 30 cm) and maize crops are grown.
- Locations have been burned, but there were no signs or reports of mines having exploded.
- On the Mozambican side, houses have been constructed backing on to the border fence.
- The second half of the area features rocky terrain: It would not be possible to lay mines or there would be no point.
- Mozambican experts consulted indicated that all PMD 6 type mines discovered in the past 10 years have been decayed & could not function.



The conclusion arrived at by the implementation support visit was based on the following factors that:

- There were no evident signs of landmines (e.g. craters, dead animals, mine fragments, etc.); There are no officially recorded casualties.
- Well used walking paths cross through the area in at least 10 places, as can be seen on the slide. In another location, the fence is damaged and stolen cars had been driven through the area.
- The Ministry of Agriculture has constructed dwellings, which are occupied, in two locations. One such dwelling can be seen on the slide. A large area adjacent to one dwelling has been ploughed to a depth of at least 30 centimeters and maize crops are grown.
- A number of locations have been burned, but there were no signs or reports of mines having exploded.
- On the Mozambican side of the area, houses have been constructed backing on to the border fence.
- The second half of the area features rocky terrain: It would not be possible to lay mines, or, there would be no point because people could easily avoid them.
- And, Mozambican experts consulted during the visit indicated that all PMD-6-type-mines discovered in the past 10 years in Mozambique have decayed and could not function.

## Support visit's recommendations

- Swaziland should carry out a physical verification check in order to ensure that the area that is considered dangerous due to the suspected presence of mines indeed can now be said it is safe.
- A sample check could be undertaken by using standard manual demining / survey techniques to run lanes across the area.
- If specific areas are excluded 20-30 lanes would be sufficient.
- Verification should be done according to accepted standards, and work monitored.
- The activity should be documented. If no mines are found, records could be used for transparency reporting of completion.
- If any mines are found, they should be marked and then the situation re-assessed to see if a full clearance operation is necessary.



On the basis of the implementation support visit's conclusion, the following was recommended to Swaziland:

That Swaziland should carry out a physical verification check in order to ensure that the area that is considered to be dangerous due to the suspected presence of mines indeed can now be said it is safe.

In addition, it was recommended that a sample check should be undertaken by using standard manual demining / survey techniques to run lanes across the area.

The ISU team suggested that if specific areas could be excluded, such as cultivated areas, areas with dwellings and rocky zones, a minimum of 20 lanes but certainly no more than 30 lanes would be sufficient.

It was recommended that verification should be done according to accepted standards, that work should be monitored, and that the activity should be documented. If no mines are found, records could be used for transparency reporting of completion.

If any mines are found, they should be marked and then the situation re-assessed to see if a full clearance operation is necessary.

## IMATC visit – Nov/Dec 2006

- November 29, 2006: IMATC instructor surveys area with USDF: Confirms findings of October implementation support visit.
- IMATC conducts 10 day refresher training for USDF personnel.
- December 4, 2006: USDF personnel deploy to begin process of clearing 20 lanes.
- Independent observers were invited to witness Swaziland's efforts.
- As of April 2007, Swaziland had marked and established 6 working lanes and 3 lanes had been demined; No mines had been found.
- Vegetation is very dense in places, naturally slowing the manual demining progress.
- While in ideal circumstances it may be possible to do what is required in weeks, a more realistic time period from start to end would be six months.



Swaziland agreed with the recommendations made by the implementation support visit and followed up by seeking technical support from the Nairobi-based International Mine Action Training Centre.

On November 29, 2006, an instructor from this Centre surveyed the area with members of Swaziland's defence forces. This survey confirmed the findings of October implementation support visit.

The Centre conducted a 10 day refresher training for USDF personnel and on December 4, 2006 USDF personnel were deployed to begin process of clearing 20 lanes.

Independent observers were invited to witness Swaziland's efforts. The photos in this slide were taken by one such observer, a former Landmine Monitor researcher.

As of April 2007, Swaziland had marked and established 6 working lanes and 3 lanes had been demined; No mines had been found.

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While in ideal circumstances it may be possible to do what is required in weeks, a more realistic time period from start to end would be six months.

## Conclusions



- It should be possible for Swaziland to have fulfilled its Article 5 obligations well prior to the 7MSP.
- Article 5 implementation has been a case study of cooperation – internally with all relevant ministries involved and internationally with support provided by ISU/GICHD and IMATC.
- The involvement of high level officials has helped move the implementation process forward.
- While Swaziland's implementation challenge is small compared to others, it still requires the State to be fully engaged in order to fulfil its obligations.

In conclusion, it should be possible for Swaziland to have fulfilled its Article 5 obligations well prior to the 8th Meeting of the States Parties.

That is, by the time we meet in Jordan, Swaziland looks forward to being able to declare that it has fulfilled its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention by having determined that there no longer are areas under its jurisdiction or control which are dangerous due to the presence or suspected presence of anti-personnel mines.

In closing, please allow me to share a few additional observations:

- First: Article 5 implementation by Swaziland has been a case study of practical-minded and pragmatic cooperation. This cooperation started at home, internally, with all relevant ministries involved. Internationally it has involved support provided by the GICHD, including by the Implementation Support Unit, and, by the International Mine Action Training Centre.
- Second: The involvement of high level officials has helped moved the implementation process forward. This includes the engagement of the Chief of the Defence Force and the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Defence.
- And third: While Swaziland's implementation challenge is small compared to others, it still has required the Swazi State to be fully engaged in order to fulfil its obligations.