

**Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of
Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**
Intervention by Bhutan
Meeting of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, 27-28 May 2013
Article 5

Co-Chairs (*Mozambique and the Netherlands*)
Distinguished delegates

I thank you for giving me the floor. Allow me to express my delegation's appreciation for the leadership provided by the Co-Chairs to the work of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance. I am confident that our deliberations will result in a fruitful outcome under the able guidance of the Co-Chairs and in this regard, I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Bhutan became a State Party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction on 18th August 2005 and the Convention entered into force on 1st February 2006. In keeping with our obligations as a State Party, Bhutan submitted its Initial Transparency Report in May 2007. Since then, we have been actively engaged with our national stakeholders to meet our demining obligations.

Co-Chairs,

At the 12th Meeting of the States Parties in December 2012, my delegation had reported the following:

1. Since the submission of our Initial Transparency Report in May 2007, the Royal Bhutan Army has destroyed 2,370 MNM-14 and 2,183 M-16 anti-personnel landmines. These were either unserviceable or expired.
2. The minefields in Nganglam under Samdrup Jongkhar District were cleared of all mines in the period between the 10th and 16th of July 2010. These mines were laid on five tracks covering an area of 1,360 sq. meters that consisted of **41** M-16 mines. These areas are now clear of mines and are safe for the free movement of people and animals.
3. Presently, there are only three locations containing mines in Gobarkunda under Zhemgang District with a total of **50** MNM-14 mines and **12** M-16 mines. These three locations constitute a total area of 4,030 sq. meters. The three areas were fenced

between 3rd and 8th of March 2012 and notice boards installed so that the people are appropriately alerted and the areas contained.

The Royal Bhutan Army could not remove the mines in these locations, as these are heavily forested areas with thick vegetation. Moreover, the fact that some of the mines may have shifted from their original position, due to heavy monsoon rains has hindered our demining efforts. Nevertheless, we are exploring ways to demine this area by using the Charge Line Mine Clearing (CLMC) method. We are hopeful that these minefields can be cleared by the winters of 2012-13.

4. The total number of mines retained by the Royal Bhutan Army is **490** of which 245 is the MNM-14 and 245 the M-16 mines. These have been retained solely for the purposes of training. The number of mines retained is exclusive of the mines in Goburkunda.
5. The Royal Bhutan Army conducts a weeklong training for its officers and troops every year. All officers and troops are given a basic mine laying and clearing training and few undergo specialized training in mine clearing and removal of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED).
6. In keeping with our commitment to international peace and security as a responsible member of the United Nations, Bhutan cleared minefields that were located in Manas under Zhemgang District, even before we became a party to this Convention. These minefields consisted of **170** MNM-14 and **45** M-16 mines that covered an area of 30,000 sq. meters. The demining activity was carried out between 31st January and 4th February in 2005.
7. Bhutan does not have any other mined areas other than the previously mentioned locations in Gobarkunda. The Royal Government is confident that we will be able to fulfill our obligations under Article 5 of the Convention within the stated deadline of 2016.

Co-Chairs,

I am now pleased to report that as stated by my delegation during the 12th Meeting of the States Parties, and in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention, we have now destroyed all anti-personnel landmines in the three areas in Gobarkunda under Zhemgang District. With the demining of the Gobarkunda mine fields, there are no antipersonnel mines laid in any area on the territory of Bhutan.

In closing, I take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Convention and to place on record our appreciation to the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee and the Implementation Support Unit for their support and cooperation.

Thank you.