



STATEMENT OF H.E. GEN. SEREI KOSAL
HEAD OF CAMBODIAN DELEGATION AT THE OPENING OF
THE 15TH MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO MINE BAN TREATY

SANTIAGO, CHILE, 28 NOVEMBER, 2016

Mr. President;
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;
Distinguished Delegates,

First of all allow me to express our profound thanks for your kind invitation and all necessary arrangements for participating in the 15th Meeting of the State Parties which takes place in this beautiful city of Santiago, Chile. On behalf of the Cambodian delegation, I would like to congratulate you for being elected as the president of the fifteenth Meeting of the State Parties. Under your leadership and with your extensive experience in diplomacy, I strongly believe that all State Parties will unite and join together steadfastly to address and tackle the landmine issues around the globe, aiming for the end of the people's sufferings, enhanced global socio-economic development and human security. I would also like to congratulate and sincerely admire H.E Ambassador Bertrand de Crombrugge of Belgium, President of the 14 Meeting of State Parties for his great achievements made to the convention and for his initiative of establishment of a new architecture and mechanism for more effectively implement the Convention since the adoption of the Maputo Action Plan 2014-2019.

As always remained, Cambodia spares no efforts and commitment to implement the convention's norms and other humanitarian obligations, and work toward the success of their action plans and goals. Since MAPUTO action plan and MAPUTO plus 15 adopted on 27 June 2014 in force, a great deal of achievements have been made and advanced on mine clearance and survey, mine risk education, victim assistance, planning and prioritization, gender mainstreaming in mine action, research and development of new technologies, international cooperation and assistance in mine action at the national, regional and international levels. Mine action sector has been better strengthened with increased national institutional capacity, improved regulatory and monitoring functions and better coordination of strategic priorities and development assistance as such a new National Mine Action Strategy (2017-2025) is being developed, laid out a new roadmap and milestones with concrete approaches to ensure that all remaining challenges are completely addressed by 2025. My colleagues will present the elaboration of all achievements later at the relevant sessions this week.

Mine action sector in Cambodia is at the crossroad that requires the convention to pay much attention on. Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) in Cambodia, believed to be sparse and inactive, continue to claim lives and limbs. People daily live and farm in fear and under psychological threat and insecure, as I witnessed, even if considerable drop of casualty rate, and the remaining contamination still remains at large. Meanwhile, the Royal Government of Cambodia continues to remain committed and prioritize the mine action; apparently Samdech Akak Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia and the President of Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) strongly suggested to formulate the 18th Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals at the conference on "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" at United Nations, New York. In addition, contributions from the Royal Government of Cambodia have been made by all forms ranging from in kind and in cash, and to considering cost sharing modality. However, the financial contributions from donors continue to descend by haft and thus are not responsive to the intensified efforts of mine clearance for a mine free Cambodia.

The population in Cambodia has been growing significantly from approximately 3-5 millions in 1979 to 15 million plus at the present. Therefore, the high demand for settlement and agricultural lands surged according to the growing population and in line of the RGC's policy on agricultural and rural development. penetration and occupation of the new lands have continuingly reached to the high risk areas both inside and outside the BLS polygons, especially the mountainous and forested areas along borders with Thailand, Vietnam and Laos, where the lands of those areas are fertile but very hot battlefields of guerrilla wars and highly contaminated by landmines and ERW, and the places where a large death toll is taking place. Obviously, accidents from January to October 2016 accounted for 75 casualties in total including 24 people were killed, 27 injured and 24 amputated. This causes a grave concern for RGC. Landmine and ERW significantly impedes the national development and other development projects.

Therefore, I strongly appeal to all donors to stand firm, hand in hand, unswervingly to continue to support global mine action and Cambodia to get our job done by 2025. How to get our job done will be presented at the side event to be taken place on 30 November 2016 and when to get our job done is depending on the ensured fulfillment of commitment of the resources from all of us here.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to thank and appreciate UNDP, especially Ms Setsuko Yamazaki, UNDP country director to Cambodia, the one that well comprehend the landmines/ERW situation in Cambodia, for their efforts in mobilizing the resources for mine action in Cambodia, struggling to overcome all budgetary constraints in order to fill the gaps, and the RGC is also advancing the effort in cost sharing contribution to fill this gap.

Finally, I would like to express my sincerest thanks to all friends in mine action and all partners for your support and assistance to mine action in Cambodia with a common vision to build a mine free Cambodia and also wish a successful and fruitful meeting.

Thank you for your attention.