

ZIMBABWE'S UPDATE TO THE INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OF STATE PARTIES ON 19 TO 20 MAY 2016

INTRODUCTION

1. Distinguished Delegates, Zimbabwe is making commendable progress towards total decontamination of the country to meet her Article 5 Obligation. Ladies and gentleman you will recall that in one of the previous meetings Zimbabwe reported having finished ascertainment of the extent of contamination however this was through non-technical survey. As the technical survey and proper mapping of one of the minefields is progressing, the extent of contamination has slightly increased.

2. Regardless of the challenges on the ground, Zimbabwe remains committed to meeting the set deadlines. Demining operations are being conducted on three minefields by National Mine Clearance Unit, HALO Trust and Norwegian People's Aid. ICRC is also playing a pivotal role by rendering valuable assistance to ZIMAC and National Mine Clearance Unit.

CURRENT PROGRESS

3. While the results of the non-technical Survey completed in March 2015 indicated the cumulative remaining mined land in Zimbabwe to be 62 443 206m², results of the technical survey and mapping on all the remaining Suspected Hazardous Areas has proved that the actual remaining area as at 30 April 2016 was **74,272,561 m²**.

- a. **National Mine Clearance Squadron.** The National Mine Clearance Squadron continues with clearance on the Limpopo/Crooks Corner to Sango Border minefields. From 1st April 2016, when they resumed demining operations following their annual rainy season break

they have cleared a cumulative area of **21 763m²**, recovering and destroying **28** mines in the process. This commendable progress is a direct result of the continued assistance being rendered by the International Committee of the Red Cross(ICRC) to the National Mine Clearance Unit. The Unit also completed clearance of Mukumbura Encirclement minefield where a total of **25 000m²** were cleared and 214 AP mines recovered and destroyed. QA/QC was completed and the land is now open for use by the community.

b. **HALO Trust.** Clearance of Musengezi to Rwenya minefield by HALO Trust is progressing well. From 01 January to 31 Apr 2016, a total area of **98 182m²** was cleared and **2092** anti-personnel mines were recovered and destroyed. ZIMAC is going to conduct the post clearance inspection of this area in the coming weeks. Land release is expected during the 3rd quarter of the year (2016). The land to be released will include the 600 000m² that was certified mine free by the ZIMAC QA/QC Team in November 2015.

c. **Norwegian People's Aid.** NPA deminers continued clearance of Sheba Forest to Leacon Hill minefield. Currently quality control is being conducted by ZIMAC QA/QC Team on a **315 445m²** segment of this minefield that was completed early this month.

d **Mine Risk Education (MRE).** National Mine Clearance Squadron, HALO Trust and NPA continue to carryout community liaison to communities living in the areas they are demining. ZIMAC in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) periodically conduct MRE in the affected border line communities and schools. A Mine Risk Awareness Music Gala has been planned for 21 May

2016 in Mwenezi area as part of efforts to bring people together and have an opportunity to conduct Mine Risk Education.

e. **Victim Assistance.** Zimbabwean mine victims like all other persons living with disabilities are catered for under the Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare. ZIMAC is making efforts to make sure all the victims are included in the Social Welfare Department database and where possible source for assistance from willing donors especially in terms of provision of artificial limbs. Notwithstanding the economic hardships the country is going through, commendable progress has been made in the rehabilitation of mine victims. Identified victims are taken to rehabilitation centres where together with other citizens with disabilities are taught various self-support skills.

CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT

4. Zimbabwe continues to engage the International Community and other States Parties for assistance and support in order to clear the remaining mined areas. The partnership with the ICRC is proving to be worthwhile and its continuation is so beneficial to the capacity and pace of clearance of the National Mine Clearance Unit. As I speak efforts are currently underway and at an advanced stage for the establishment of the second National Demining Unit which is being equipped by the ICRC. ICRC has lined up Senior Quality Management and Operations Officers' Course for June 2016 and an EOD level 2 Course in the second half of 2016. This is part of the capacity building programme by ICRC to ZIMAC.

ARTICLE 5 OBLIGATION

5. Distinguished Delegates, Zimbabwe remains committed to her Article 5 Obligations. This year alone it is expected that by the end of 2016 almost 1 500 000m² of land will be released nationwide.

6. I am happy to inform you that progress is at an advanced stage in engaging two more international demining organisations so as to increase the rate of clearance. Cabinet approved the two proposed MOUs with MAG and Apopo on Tuesday 17 May 2016. This paves way for the signing of the two MOUs that will be arranged as soon as possible. Thereafter the two organisations will be allocated areas to work on. My appeal to the donor community is to consider funding the newly engaged demining organisations MAG and Apopo as well as HALO and NPA that were engaged in 2012.

CONCLUSION

7. With the good news that there will be an increase in funding to HALO Trust and NPA by their respective donors and envisaged coming on board of additional two International Demining Organisations, Zimbabwe would see an increased rate of clearance to meet the set deadlines. In this regard, allow me dear colleagues to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to all the donor countries that have supported landmine clearance in Zimbabwe and to urge those that have not done so to consider funding demining in the country in order to contribute to a mine-free Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe remains committed to her Article 5 Obligations and recognises the need for cooperation in achieving this important objective. Indeed together we will conquer the mine menace, achieve a mine free Zimbabwe and indeed realise the goal of a mine-free world by 2025.

I thank you