

STATEMENT
by H.E. Ambassador Yuriy KLYMENKO,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations Office and other
International Organizations in Geneva
(APMBC Meeting of Experts, June 30 – July 2, 2020)

Mr. Chair,

I would like to start by extending my warmest congratulations to you and wishing you every success in your endeavors. Please be assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation with you to advance the objectives of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Our country acceded to the Convention on June 1, 2006; in 2007 Ukraine declared its full compliance with Article 5 of the Ottawa Convention by submitting its first national report under Article 7 of the APMBC, confirming the absence of areas under Ukraine's jurisdiction and control, contaminated with anti-personnel mines. This was further confirmed in yearly national reports from 2007 through 2013.

However, as many of you well know, since February 20, 2014 Ukraine is under the armed aggression of the Russian Federation, which is not a State Party to the APMBC and actively uses anti-personnel mines. Because of this, our country has to deal with a drastically increased number of this weaponry and other dangerous ERW in the southeast of Ukraine. In particular, PMN-2 mines, which are used by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, are being found on south-eastern Ukrainian soil on a regular basis. For example, on January 30, 2020, 240 units of these mines were found in the village of Orikhove (Donetsk region). Planted by Russia-backed illegal armed groups in residential areas and routes of communication between inhabited localities, these mines pose a direct threat not only to the military personnel, but also to the civil population, causing death and severe casualties among innocent citizens, including children.

Preliminary estimates show that about 8% of the lands (totalling to 7 000 км²), which were liberated from the occupation administration in Donetsk and Luhansk regions contain or suspect to contain anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war (ERW). The areas contaminated with anti-personnel mines are located along the contact line, where daily intensive fire takes place, which significantly obstructs the demining activities.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

Despite the above-mentioned significant challenges in the security field related to Russia's ongoing since 2014 armed aggression against Ukraine, our country does its utmost to further comply with its obligations under this fundamental international document, as well as the Oslo Action Plan.

Since July 6, 2014, over 40 demining groups, created by relevant Ukrainian governmental bodies, in close cooperation with the UN Mine Action Service, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, OSCE, NATO, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Fondation Suisse de Déminage, Danish Demining Group, UNICEF, Halo Trust and others, have been actively engaged in performing a broad range of humanitarian demining activities on the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, liberated from the control of Russia-backed terrorists.

As of today, since the beginning of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, demining groups and pyrotechnic units of central executive bodies have destroyed more than 460 thousand explosive devices, inspected over 35 thousand hectares of land and water, 1.7 thousand km of roads and 938 km of railway tracks.

Nonetheless, much more remains to be done. Due to the ongoing aggression against Ukraine, the disposal of anti-personnel mines and clearance of contaminated areas continues to be of vital importance. Unfortunately, however, Ukraine's resources are limited, so these humanitarian demining and disposal activities would be significantly facilitated by further intensified cooperation with the international community, first of all in the field of sharing modern ERW detection and destruction technologies, providing necessary equipment and financial assistance. Detailed information about Ukraine's specific needs in this regard can be found in our extension request.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

This brings me to the issue of Article 5 implementation in Ukraine.

Ukraine does not have control over the temporary occupied parts of our territory in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as well as over the temporarily occupied by Russia Autonomous Republic of Crimea. The ongoing military standoff in eastern Ukraine and continuous hostilities by the aggressor state cause further contaminations of the territories along the contact line. The irregularity and non-selectivity of the use of anti-personal mines by the Russia-backed illegal armed groups in Donetsk and Luhansk regions do not allow to accurately estimate the scale of ERW contamination and precisely identify all mined areas. Thus, it is quite difficult to arrange fully effective national programs for their demining, as well as to determine the resources required to carry out relevant mine clearance operations. In fact, complete demining of contaminated territories in the southeast of Ukraine will only be possible after the Russian Federation and Russia-backed illegal armed groups completely cease their hostilities, constitutional order is effectively restored on the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, and our country regains full control of its state border.

Against this backdrop, our delegation herewith requests States Parties to consider granting Ukraine a 2 year extension for the implementation of its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention (i.e. until 1 December 2023).

Ukraine's extension request, which has been submitted to the Implementation Support Unit and Committee on Article 5 implementation of the APMBC, contains further in-depth, detailed and technical information regarding the scope of the issue on the ground and current challenges in the field of anti-personnel mine contamination in the southeast of Ukraine.

**Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

Our country, as always, remains fully committed to its obligations under this indispensable international treaty. We hope for the understanding of the Member States of the exceptional circumstances and challenges affecting nowadays the realisation by Ukraine of Article 5 of the APMBC, and rely on the worldwide community's further support of our endeavours in implementing the Convention.

I thank you.