

Statement of the Delegation of the Kingdom of Thailand
By Lt. Gen. Kanit Chomanan,
Director-General of Thailand Mine Action Center
at the 19th Meeting of State Parties, the Hague, the Netherland

Mr. President,

At the outset, on behalf of the Thai delegation, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to you and your team, as well as, the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) for organising this meeting. We are confident that your able leadership will bring this meeting to a successful conclusion.

Since becoming a State Party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in 1997, Thailand has put our utmost efforts to fulfill our obligations under the Convention. The Royal Thai Government is working in collaboration with its partners and stakeholders concerned in order to fulfill the mine-free objective.

Thailand was granted a second extension to our mine-clearance deadline at the 16th Meeting of States Parties, allowing us until 31 October 2023 to fulfill the obligations under Article 5 of the Convention. Since then, Thailand has been working to advance its clearance progress, with the updated workplan on Article 5 submitted to the ISU in 2019 in order to address the remaining challenges in the possible mine contaminated areas.

Thailand's Five-Year Plan for mine-clearance is carried out in 2 phases. Phase 1, from 2019 – 2020, demining work focused on Non-Technical Survey (NTS) to obtain precise information on mine contaminated areas. Phase 2, from 2021 – 2023, the operations focus on the Technical Survey and clearance, based on information from Phase 1.

During Phase 1, Thailand successfully released nearly 300,000,000 sq.m. of safe land back to the people, most of them through cancellation. The successful release covered the areas 10% larger than we initially planned.

In 2021, Thailand moved towards the implementation of Phase 2 plan. To date, we have released 23,000,000 sq.m. in this phase, which is 7,000,000 sq.m. less than our initial plan, due to unexpected challenges during the clearance operations. Firstly, the deminers encountered high density of mines and UXOs in these areas – much higher than what was originally anticipated. In some areas, nearly 20,000 mines per 500,000 sq.m have been recovered. Secondly, access to the contaminated areas was also more difficult than expected due to the geographic condition of the areas, including rough terrains. Therefore, the clearance operations would require longer time and more considerable efforts. Lastly, other challenges remain in the areas along the border,

which require coordination with neighbouring countries. Further details can be found in Thailand's Article 7 report this year.

Mr. President,

Despite our best efforts, Thailand realises that we will not be able to complete our clearance operations within the expected period. We are currently drafting the extension request, and are working closely with the ISU to ensure that our extension request is submitted by 31 March 2022.

Mr. President,

Apart from mine clearance operations, Thailand continues to place high priority on Mine Risk Education (MRE). Due to the COVID – 19 pandemic, Thailand has to apply alternative MRE operational approaches, including seeking support from the Village Health Volunteers, who regularly visit the areas to ensure that the locals receive information on COVID – 19 prevention, to also assist in delivering MRE messages. Other approaches include local radio broadcast, as well as social media and communication platforms. In addition, Thailand also puts high emphasis on ensuring proper marking and zoning of the mine contaminated areas in order to prevent future accidents

The above-mentioned efforts require great amount of cooperation with international and local partners. Thus, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners who provide invaluable support to Thailand, namely: the governments of Japan, Norway, and the United States; the Marine Corps Forces, Pacific; the HD R&D Program; the Norwegian People's Aid; the Golden West Humanitarian Foundation; and the Thai Civilian Deminer Association.

In closing, please allow me to reiterate once again Thailand's commitment to the Mine Ban Treaty and our full support for the work of the Convention.

Thank you, Mr. President.
