



Thematic Session on Completion and Sustainable National Capacities

(Wednesday, 23rd June, 4 pm -5.45 pm)

Mr. President,

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Sri Lanka experienced nearly three decades of conflict, which ended in 2009. This left significant levels of mines and ERW contamination throughout northern and eastern districts of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has been able to declare 142 Sqkm of land as free of antipersonnel mines and ERW and those areas have been handed over to the community to start their day to day activities. Now Sri Lanka is moving towards completion as we have only 13 square kilometers of remaining land contamination with mines and ERW. However, the remaining contamination imposes significant challenges for resettlement, agriculture, irrigation, and access to infrastructure, hindering socio-economic development of those areas.

With the approach of completion, the importance of further developing sustainable national structures and related processes to manage residual contamination is becoming increasingly more central.

Humanitarian Demining Unit of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA HDU) has an experienced and professional capacity. Significant resources have been dedicated through the national budget to SLA HDU and now the Engineer brigade of the Sri Lanka Army has the necessary infrastructure in place to deal with residual contamination.

Officers of the SLA HDU have been trained on EOD, quality assurance and IMSMA with the help of the donor countries and they have been deployed in the humanitarian de-mining unit of the Sri Lanka army for mine clearance operations. Majority of the Regional Mine Action Office staff are seconded from the Sri Lanka Army and they provide field level QA for all demining operators as well planning and task allocation of Mine Action with the National Mine Action Center. Once de-mining is completed, they will rejoin with SLA HDU.

Sri Lanka, therefore is in a good position to effectively and efficiently manage the long-term residual contamination with national capacities following completion.

Recognizing that Sri Lanka is moving towards completion and fulfilling Article 5 obligations of the APMBC in the near future, greater focus will be placed on planning the transition phase from a mainly proactive mine clearance programme to the reactive management of residual ERW.

The NMAC recognizes the importance of explaining the post-completion roles and responsibilities and they have been effectively communicated and known to all relevant stakeholders.

A fully-fledged demining unit with necessary infrastructure, vehicles, ambulances etc, has been established at the Engineering Brigade Headquarter of Sri Lanka Army at Boo-Oya, Vauniya, an area in the northern part of the country which is identified as a central location for the all Mine and ERW affected districts.

The Army Corps of Engineers of the SLA HDU unit at the Boo Oya Camp will continue to function with trained officials of the Sri Lanka Army beyond the termination of National Mine Action Programme. The current operation system including continuation of the Explosive Ordnance Risk Education as well as update of the IMSMA database will be continued by the SLA HDU.

I thank you



Management of Residual Contamination

Objective 5

Long-term residual contamination is managed with sustainable national capacities



Progress

- EOD level III given to 40+ SLA HDU officers
- 5+ SLA HDU officers qualified IMSMA Admin level 1 & 2
- Given QA training 50+ SLA HDU officers
- Established SLA HDU office in Boo Oya

Way Ahead

- The Army deployment will cover the EOD requirement to ensure the security of people.
- SLA HDU will be continued beyond the termination of National Mine Action Programme in order to ensure the residual contamination is addressed.
- The current operation system will be continued and the IMSMA database will be updated by the SLA HDU.



Management of Residual Contamination



Progress

- SLA HDU office established with necessary infrastructure
- SLA HDU having MDD, Manual and mechanical de-mining crew



