

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION (Belgium, Norway, Sri Lanka and Zambia (Chair))

Intersessional Meetings 22 – 24 June 2021

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 5 BY THAILAND

I. Progress in implementation (OAP Action #8, #22)

1. Thailand reported that in 2020 it addressed 147 mined areas measuring 157,070,446 square metres, including 127,307,011 square metres cancelled, 28,845,511 square metres reduced and 917,924 square metres cleared resulting in the destruction of 9,355 anti-personnel mines and 497 items of explosive remnants of war. Thailand further reported that an additional 1,829,711 square metres of confirm hazardous areas was discovered during operations in 7 Provinces.
2. Thailand reported that in 2020 4 Provinces were declared mine-free in 2020, Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son, Chumphon and Chanthaburi.
3. The Committee observed that the information provided by Thailand on progress in implementation allowed for comparability with that provided in its 2019 updated work plan. The Committee welcomed Thailand providing disaggregated information on progress in accordance with land release methodology using the Guide to Reporting and in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) (Action #8, Action #22).

II. Clarity regarding remaining challenge (OAP Action #18, #22)

4. The Committee observed that Thailand reported a high degree of clarity¹ concerning its remaining challenge (Action #18). Thailand reported a remaining challenge of 226 mined areas measuring 62,953,510 square metres located in 19 Districts of 7 Provinces, including, 183 confirmed hazardous areas measuring 23,276,882 square metres and 43 suspected hazardous areas measuring 39,676,628 square metres (Action #22).
5. The Committee welcomed Thailand reporting remaining challenges in a manner consistent with IMAS, disaggregating by 'suspected hazardous areas' and 'confirmed hazardous areas' and their relative size, and type of contamination (Action #22).
6. Action #18 of the Oslo Action Plan requests States that have not yet done so will identify the precise perimeter of mined areas, to the extent possible, and establish evidence based, accurate baselines of contamination based on information collected from all relevant sources, no later than by the Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties in 2021. **The Committee observed that Thailand was still in the process of identifying the precise perimeter of mined areas** (Action #18).

¹ "High degree of clarity" has been used when a State Party has provided a list of all remaining areas (known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines), the estimated size of each area, the status of each area (i.e., "known" or "suspected"), and Information on the geographic location of each area.

7. Action #18 of the Oslo Plan requests States to report on having established their baseline through inclusive consultations with women, girls, boys and men. **The Committee observed that Thailand had not provided updated information in its Article 7 Report on its efforts to establish Thailand's baseline through inclusive consultations with women, girls, boys and men, and would welcome additional information on Thailand's efforts in this regard.**

III. National plans for clearance and survey (OAP Actions #1, #2, #3, #6, #19, #20, #26)

8. The Committee recalled that Thailand's updated work plan submitted in 2019 contained a national evidence based and costed plan for clearance and survey in place for the period (2018- 2023), consisting of two phases, Phase 1: completed in 31 October 2018, and Phase 2: 1 November 2018 – 31 October 2023 (Action #2, Action #19).
9. The Committee observed that Thailand had provided annually adjusted milestones based on new evidence which projects to address 30,584,267 square metres in 2021, including 26,046,959 square metres of suspected hazardous area and 4,537,308 square metres of confirmed hazardous area. The Committee noted that Thailand reported annually adjusted milestones based on new evidence, including information on the number of areas and the amount of mined area to be addressed annually (Action #20).
10. Action #1 of the Oslo Action Plan requests States to Demonstrate high levels of national ownership, including by integrating Convention implementation activities into national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, humanitarian response plans and national strategies for the inclusion of persons with disabilities as appropriate, and by making financial and other commitments to implementation. **The Committee observed that Thailand had not provided information in its Article 7 Report on its efforts to integrate Convention implementation activities into national development plans, poverty reduction strategies and humanitarian response plans, and would welcome additional information in this regard (Action #1).**
11. Action #6 of the Oslo Action Plan requests States to strengthen partnerships and integrate responses between the mine action community and relevant humanitarian, peacebuilding, development and human rights communities, bearing in mind the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. **The Committee observed that Thailand had not provided information in its Article 7 Report on its efforts to strengthen partnerships and integrate responses between mine action related activities and humanitarian response plans, peacebuilding, development or human rights plans, where relevant, and would welcome additional information in this regard (Action #6).**
12. The Committee observed that in 2020 the Royal Government of Thailand provided an annual allocation of US \$7.5 million in support of its mine action programme and additional funding of US \$35,000 for the procurement of equipment. (Action #1).
13. Action #3 of the Oslo Action Plan requests States to ensure that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered and inform all areas of Convention implementation and mine action programmes, in order to deliver an inclusive approach. Strive to remove barriers to full, equal and gender balanced participation in mine action and in Convention meetings. **The Committee observed that Thailand had not provided information in its Article 7 Report on its efforts to consider gender and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities in the development of its work plans as well as in ongoing work to achieve completion of its obligations under Article 5, and would welcome additional information in this regard (Action #3).**

14. The Committee recalled that Thailand had provided information on efforts to establish a sustainable national capacity to address any previously unknown mined areas that may be discovered following Thailand declaring completion of its Article 5 obligations in its 2017 extension request, indicating that “Five Humanitarian Mine Action Units (HMAU) were established to conduct demining operations and cooperate with other local organizations in conducting MRE and victim assistance”, and that once Thailand becomes mine-free, TMAC will shift focus from clearance to an information and knowledge centre for landmines and unexploded ordnance (Action #26).

IV. Efficient and expedient implementation (OAP Actions #5, #9, #27)

15. Thailand reported that in 2020 it revised its National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) and Standard Operating Procedures to ensure that NMAS reflect the latest methodologies in line with IMAS. The Committee welcomes the updated information from Thailand (Action #5).

16. Thailand reported that its information management system has been strengthened to include Arc GIS online to allow policy-makers to view and analyse the overall mine situation, allow operators to effectively plan operations, assists the Information Management (IM) unit to effectively store the necessary statistics from all operations (Action #9).

17. The Committee noted that Thailand reported on its efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance, including updates to national standards, the use of a mobile bomb cutting system and the use of UAV drone technology (Action #27).

V. Actions in accordance with plans in extension requests and decisions on them

18. In considering Thailand’s 2017 extension request, the Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties requested Thailand to submit updated information on several matters. The Committee welcomes the information provided by Thailand on;

- Progress made relative to the commitments contained in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Work Plan contained in Thailand’s request;
- Update on efforts put forth during Phase 1 of Thailand’s Plan of Work to prepare for Phase 2 of the Work Plan including the progress of negotiations in order to address Areas to be Demarcated;
- The outcomes of survey efforts and how additional clarity obtained may change Thailand’s estimation of the remaining implementation challenge;
- Update on progress in updating the National Mine Action Standards to be in line with the latest version of IMAS and the results of this effort;
- Resource mobilisation efforts and external financing received and resources made available by the government of Thailand to support implementation efforts, including through efforts to expand its civilian demining capacity and the results of these effort;
- Updates on efforts to explore new technology to help survey areas with are hard to access near the borders and the results of these efforts; and

- Update on efforts to make continuous improvements in the capacity of its information management team, systems and processes to enable more precise information on survey and clearance operations to be collected and displayed.

VI. Mine risk education and reduction (OAP Actions #28-32)

16. Thailand reported in detail on the actions it has taken to effectively exclude the population from areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, including mine risk education and reduction programmes (MRE/R)) the methodologies used, challenges faced and results achieved disaggregated by gender and age (Action #32).
17. Thailand reported that MRE is integrated into ongoing survey, clearance activities as well as with village health volunteer activities, as well as through the use of periodic school visits, village visits, local press, community leaders, authorities, social media platforms and community radio broadcasts (Action #28).
18. Action #29 of the Oslo Action Plan requests States to Provide context-specific mine risk education and reduction programmes to all affected populations and groups at risk. Ensure that such programmes are developed on the basis of a needs assessment, that they are tailored to the threat encountered by the population, and that they are sensitive to gender, age, disability and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account. The Committee observed that while Thailand reported that MRE operations are planned to ensure the most vulnerable are kept informed of the risks, with each Humanitarian Mine Action Unit (HMAU) coordinating with local community leaders and authorities on the broadcast of MRE messages and the role of HMAU in determining which groups are most vulnerable. **The Committee observed that Thailand had not provided information in its Article 7 Report on its efforts to ensure MRE/R programmes are sensitive to gender, age, disability and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account. The Committee would welcome further information in this regard (Action #29).**
19. Action #30 of the Oslo Action Plan requests States to Prioritise people most at risk by linking mine risk education and reduction programmes and messages directly to an analysis of available casualty and contamination data, an understanding of the affected population's behaviour, risk pattern and coping mechanisms, and, wherever possible, anticipated population movements. The Committee observed that while Thailand reported that MRE operations are adapted to suit specific conditions and local settings, including the dispatching of mobile MRE teams to mine-affected areas along commuting routes, especially near the border areas. **The Committee observed that Thailand had not provided information in its Article 7 Report on its efforts to link MRE/R programmes and messages directly to an analysis of available casualty and contamination data. The Committee would welcome further information in this regard (Action #30).**
20. The Committee observed that Thailand reported a national capacity to deliver MRE/R programmes through HMAU, village health workers and teachers. (Action #31).

VII. Challenges in implementation (OAP Action #8)

19. The Committee observed that Thailand provided quality information on challenges in implementation, including the impact of COVID-19, challenges in accessing mountainous and remote terrain and mined areas close to border areas. Thailand also reported on the challenges faced in the implementation of MRE/R, including the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on travel.