

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 ZIMBABWE

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

1. Zimbabwe reported that in 2020 it released 115 “sectors” of mined areas measuring 10,545,554 square metres, including 28,947 square metres cancelled, 8,105,935 square metres reduced, and 2,410,672 square metres cleared, destroying in the process 26,911 anti-personnel mines, and 18 other items of explosive ordnance.
2. Zimbabwe also reported that as a result of survey an additional 1,969,113 square metres of mined area was identified.
3. The Committee observed that the information provided by Zimbabwe on progress in implementation allowed for comparability with that provided in its 2019 updated work plan. The Committee welcomed Zimbabwe providing disaggregated information on progress in accordance with land release methodology employed, 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 Zimbabwe provided a high degree of clarity¹ concerning its remaining challenge (Action #18). Zimbabwe reported a remaining challenge of 101 sectors in 7 confirmed mined areas of 4 Provinces, measuring 34,116,225 square metres (Action #22).
5. The Committee welcomed Zimbabwe reporting remaining challenges in a manner consistent with IMAS, disaggregating by 'suspected hazardous areas' and 'confirmed hazardous areas' and their relative size (Action #22).

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

6. The Committee recalled that Zimbabwe's updated work plan submitted in 2019 contained a national evidence based and costed plan for clearance and survey for the period 2020-2025 (Action #2, Action #19). Zimbabwe further reported having a National Mine Action Strategy in place for the period (2018-2025) (Action #2).
7. Zimbabwe reported that it would address 9,343,166 square metres in 2021, 7,899,068 square metres in 2022, 7,735,653 square metres in 2023, 5,446,038 square metres in 2024, and 3,626,690 square metres in 2025. The Committee observed that Zimbabwe had reported adjusted milestones

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”), information on the geographic location of each area.

based on new evidence, including information on the number of areas and the amount of mined area to be addressed annually (Action #20).

7. Zimbabwe reported that mine action is integrated into national development plans, poverty reduction strategy and humanitarian response plans. Zimbabwe further reported that while the programme is not mentioned in the current national development plan, in principle the programme is included under the need to emancipate remote communities and ensure improved livelihood. In this regard, Zimbabwe reported that the clearance of mines is unlocking land for communities to engage in developmental activities.
8. Action #6 of the Oslo Action Plan requests States to strengthen partnerships and integrate responses between mine action related activities and humanitarian response plans, peacebuilding, development or human rights plans, where relevant. **The Committee observed that Zimbabwe had not reported on its efforts to strengthen partnerships and integrate responses**, and would welcome additional information in this regard (Action #6).
8. The Committee observed Zimbabwe reported on the national allocation of funding to the National Mine Clearance Unit (NMCU) by the Ministry of Defence. Zimbabwe reported that the NCMU is funded by the Government through a dedicated annual vote in the national budget and is guaranteed funding at current levels until clearance is complete. Zimbabwe also reported on international donors financial commitments towards implementation through implementing partners (Action #1).
9. The Committee observed that Zimbabwe is working on a gender and diversity policy for the programme. Zimbabwe reported that the mine action programme is bound by the national policy which seeks to give equal opportunities to both genders. Zimbabwe further reported that women are being encouraged to fully participate in the programme and that all mine action data is disaggregated by women and girls, boys, and men. This ensures that the needs and perspectives of the respective groups are considered (Action #3).
10. Zimbabwe reported that its national mine action strategy and work plan have provision for the NMCU to provide a sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas following completion (Action #26).

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

11. Zimbabwe reported that its National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) were planned for revision in 2020 but were postponed until 2021. The Committee welcomes the information provided by Zimbabwe and would welcome further information on the timeline for approval of the updated national standards (Action #5).
12. Zimbabwe reported on its efforts to maintain an accurate and up-to-date information management system. In this regard, Zimbabwe reported that the ZMAC Information Management Department maintains a clear record of the status and future direction of the programme in terms of statistical data (Action #9).
13. Zimbabwe reported on its efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance by employing a demining tool box approach with methodologies, including manual clearance, mechanical and mine detection dogs to this effect (Action #27).

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

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

- Progress made relative to the commitments contained in Zimbabwe's annual clearance plan during the extension period;
- Updated information on remaining contamination disaggregated in a manner consistent with the International Mine Action Standards, including land release standards;
- Updated detailed annual plans for the implementation of its extension request based on new information gathered from progress in implementation;
- Updated information on its full range of practical methods used to release land, including reporting outcomes concerning two pilot projects concerning mechanical Assets and Mine Detection Dogs; and
- Resource mobilisation efforts and external financing received and resources made available by the government of Zimbabwe to support implementation efforts; Information on Zimbabwe's efforts to ensure that mine action is considered within national development plans and other relevant national plans which may benefit Zimbabwe's resource mobilisation efforts.

15. The Committee observed that Zimbabwe had also acted on the decisions of the 16MSP by providing information in line with the following decision of the 16MSP; Progress on Zimbabwe's commitment to relocate the ZIMAC outside of military installations once the Ministry of Defence obtains required funds.

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

16. Zimbabwe reported on the actions it has taken to effectively exclude the population from mined areas, including implementation of mine risk education and reduction programmes (MRE/R) including the methodologies used, challenges faced and results achieved disaggregated by gender and age (Action #32).

17. Zimbabwe reported that MRE/R is integrated with education, and ongoing survey, clearance and victim assistance activities (Action #28).

18. Zimbabwe reported the need to develop context-specific MRE/R for affected populations to address casualties resulting from tampering with explosive remnants of war. The Committee noted that these activities form part of Zimbabwe's efforts to provide context-specific MRE/R and welcomes further updates on its efforts to provide MRE/R on the basis of a needs assessment and tailored to the threat encountered by the population that are sensitive to gender, age, disability and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected areas into account (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 Zimbabwe reported that MRE/R programmes target local communities as part of survey, clearance activities. **The Committee observed that Zimbabwe had not reported on its efforts to link 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, and would welcome additional information in this regard (Action #30).

20. Zimbabwe reported that MRE/R programmes delivered by Army Engineers have targeted communities living adjacent to mined area (Action #31).

VII. Challenges in implementation (OAP Action #8)

21. The Committee observed that Zimbabwe had reported on the challenges in implementation of its Article 5 obligations, including the impact of COVID-19 on mine action activities, the delay of updates to NMAS due to a number of challenges, and the need for an increase in funding to the NCMU in order to replace its detectors which have since passed operational life span.