



**Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties to the
Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention
Geneva, 20-24 November 2023.**

**Statement of the Federal Republic of Somalia
on Clearance.**

Presented by Dahir Abdirahman Abdulle (Director General of SEMA)

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies, and gentlemen.

Good afternoon. Today, on behalf of the Government of Somalia, I am very pleased and honored to be here to provide a brief update on the progress and implementation of Article-5 of the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention to the Twenty-First Meeting of State Parties (21 MSP).

Somalia continues to face a threat from landmines, explosive remnants of war (ERW), and increased use of improvised explosive devices including mines of improvised nature. Minefields along the border with Ethiopia and unexploded ordnance that is abandoned across rural and urban areas, improvised explosive devices that are used in main supply routes and urban settings continue to endanger the safety of the Somali civilian population including preventing access to productive lands and supply routes.

Somalia is also bearing the consequences of climate change including the El-Nino floods resulting in extensive internal displacement, forcing affected communities to travel to unsafe locations. Locations with known minefields and the presence of explosive remnants of war (ERW) are now flooded due to the heavy rains, risking communities to encounter unexploded ordnance exposed to them. The Mine Action practitioners will need to consider the plans supporting the flood victims.

Since last year July, the Somali government and local defense forces, supported by international forces, stepped up operations to expel anti-government elements from known strongholds in Galmudug and Hirshabele States of Somalia, with tangible gains the offensive operations is now spreading to Southwest and Jubaland States in Somalia. Considering the newly recovered areas, more contamination of ERW and use of improvised explosive devices are evidenced affecting, the civilian population including those returning from displacement are at-risk of encountering explosive ordnance left behind by the armed conflict.

Since January 2022, about 89 civilians have been killed and injured by mines and ERW in **23** locations across the country. Most of them were children (over 83%). Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) have caused unparalleled harm, and civilians bear the brunt disproportionately, compared to other explosive ordnance. During the same period, at least 4,169 people are known to have been killed or injured by IEDs in urban areas and main supply routes. Whereas civilians were not the main target, they accounted for more than 55% of the casualties. This is an alarming rate.

Excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen

Somalia has embarked on the implementation of its article-5 work plan endorsed by the state parties, the work plan encompassing clearance, risk education, and capacity development activities in Somalia. I also want to take this opportunity to inform this forum that Somalia along with the Committee of Cooperation and Assistance and Implementation Support Unit (ISU) is concurrently organizing an individualized approach for Somalia to mobilize financial and technical assistance to achieve the implementation of the work plan.

I am pleased to inform you that survey and clearance activities have been progressing well and hundreds of Somali nationals and internationals are deployed in the field to carry out mine and ERW clearance and survey in affected communities in more than 40 districts of 16 regions in Somalia. Besides, we are expecting additional demining and survey teams to be deployed in some states which will contribute to making progress in meeting the article-5 obligations. Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) efforts continued, and the mine action partners are adapting innovative approaches to continue activities and expand the coverage targeting the most vulnerable groups from the affected population. The Mine Action Program in Somalia is exploring the provision of EORE in IEDs to address the staggering consequences of IED incidents affecting the civilian population.

The Government of Somalia in partnership with the international stakeholders has made significant progress towards strengthening the capability of the National Mine Action Authority (SEMA), to serve better for those in need of mine action response. The capacity of SEMA in planning, information management, coordination, and prioritizing of mine action has shown progress. SEMA will have a functioning IM core system to manage the national database by the end of this year. In addition to that SEMA will have Operations/QA personnel that can independently provide oversight to the ongoing humanitarian mine action projects in the regional states.

The Mine Action bill for SEMA has been waited for a long time but I am pleased to report that significant progress has been made in reviewing the mine action bill by the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Justice, and has now been submitted to the office of the Attorney General for final review before submitting to the cabinet for approval. The Ministry of Internal Security of the Federal Government of Somalia is committed to tabling the bill to the Federal Parliament for approval. This bill will allow SEMA to receive a national budget to support the regulation and oversight of the humanitarian mine action sector in Somalia.

Distinguished delegates,

Despite making good progress, the Mine Action Program in Somalia still faces several security and political challenges. While some parts of the country are liberated, and access to humanitarian mine action is increasing, the mine action response capacity to address the needs of the affected community remains limited. Increasing armed conflict in some parts of the country and the increase in the use of IEDs are some of the major challenges, exacerbating the need for emergency mine action response. Insufficient funding is also forcing some international mine action operators to cease operations and withdraw.

The presence of explosive ordnance continues to hinder progress in peace, security, development, and access to humanitarian assistance in Somalia, causing significant safety concerns to the population. The overall number of Explosive Ordnance-related victims is increasing year by year and support to victims and their families is very limited. Landmine contamination along the Somalia-Ethiopia border areas need immediate action to end the concerns.

Your excellencies

In line with our newly endorsed national implementation work plan for the article-5 obligation, our focus will remain to scale up the mine action program in Somalia to survey contaminated areas, and provide explosive ordnance risk education to make it possible for affected communities to prevent the dangers posed by explosive ordnance until clearance is carried out.

On behalf of the Government of Somalia, I would like to thank the people and governments of donor countries including the Governments of Japan, the United Kingdom, Norway, EU countries, Germany, the United States, and the United Nations for their contributions to the mine action program in Somalia. It is now critical more than ever for Somalia to implement the national work plan of the article-5 obligation and we request continued and increased support.

Lastly, I want to take this opportunity to thank, the men and women engaged in delivering mine action services including mine clearance, survey, and risk education to the affected communities to save lives. also special thanks to their mine action entities including the HALO Trust, Mines Advisory Group, and the United Nations Mine Action Service and national NGOs for their continued support which without their help the current achievement would not have been made. We would like to encourage their support and we look forward to their partnership on our way forward to a mine-free Somalia.

Thank you!