

Fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

30 September 2024

English only

Siem Reap, 25-29 November 2024

Item 8(c) of the provisional agenda

Review of the operation and status of the Convention

Clearing mined areas

Updated Work Plan

Submitted by Thailand*

1. The decision taken by the Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties on the request submitted by Thailand for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of antipersonnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention¹, indicates that:

“In granting the request, the Meeting noted that, while Thailand had not been able to complete the implementation of the principle commitment it had made, as recorded in the decisions of the Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties, to complete implementation by its deadline of 31 October 2023, Thailand has made commendable progress. In granting the request, the Meeting noted that Thailand was projecting that it would need approximately three years to survey suspected hazardous areas and clear confirmed hazardous areas.”

“In granting the request, the Meeting noted that, as the national demining plan may be affected by outcomes from the process of border coordination activities and the implementation of the multi-level framework in support of joint demining activities, as well as potential reduction in funding, the Convention would benefit from Thailand submitting to the Committee by 30 April 2024, an updated detailed work plan for the remaining period covered by the extension. The Meeting noted that this work plan should contain an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, annual projections of which areas and what area would be dealt with during the remaining period covered by the request and by which organisation, and a revised detailed budget.”

2. Thailand's Updated Work Plan was received on 30 April 2024.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

¹ APLC/MSP.20/2022/15.





THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND

UPDATED THREE-YEAR WORK PLAN FOR THE REQUESTED EXTENSION PERIOD (2023 – 2026)
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RECOMMENDATION BY THE TWENTIETH MEETING OF
THE STATES PARTIES (20MSP)

SUBMITTED TO THE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION

DATE 30 APRIL 2024

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Thailand Mine Action Center (TMAC)

Operation Plan: 3-year plan - Completing the Mission (2024-2026)

1. Overall

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, also known as the Ottawa Convention or Mine Ban Treaty, plays a significant role in Thailand's demining efforts. Thailand ratified the Convention on 27 November 1998, which took effect on 1 May 1999. This marked the beginning of Thailand's dedicated humanitarian demining work.

Shortly after ratifying the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the Thai government established the Thailand Mine Action Centre (TMAC) as a central body for coordinating humanitarian demining efforts, which have been carried out jointly by TMAC and other relevant agencies.

During 2000 - 2001, the Survey Action Center (SAC) also launched an operation called "Landmine Impact Survey (LIS)," revealing that landmines had contaminated 27 Thai provinces, encompassing an area of approximately 2,556.7 square kilometers.

To fulfill the obligations under the Convention, the demining work has been undertaken in four distinct phases.

Phase 1: Initial Demining (1998-2009)

Under the Ottawa Convention's ten-year timeframe, Thailand committed to clearing 2,556.7 square kilometers of landmine contamination located in 84 districts in 27 of 76 Thai provinces. While traditional demining methods proved to be labor-intensive and slow, Thailand was able to release a 2,028.4 square kilometers of mined areas, (79.3% of all contaminated areas), leaving a remaining challenge of 528.3 square kilometers as of its original 1 May 2009 deadline.

Phase 2: Strategic Shift and Extension (2009-2018)

Due to the limitations of traditional methods, Thailand requested a first extension to its demining deadline. This extended the operation from 1 May 2009 to 31 October 2018. This phase saw a shift in tactics, with a focus on Land Release (LR) coordination and collaboration. This involved working alongside communities and integrating support from international demining organizations. During this period, Thailand released 168,348,632 square meters, including additional mined areas identified during survey resulting in 13 Provinces being

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declared mine free. Despite these efforts, approximately 360 square kilometers of contaminated land remained located in 26 districts in 11 provinces.

Phase 3: Enhanced Capabilities and Border Focus (2018-2023)

During the 16th Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention in Vienna, Thailand submitted a request for a second extension. This sought an additional five years, extending the operation from 1 November 2018 to 31 October 2023 to address a remaining challenge of 360,001,368 square meters located in 11 provinces. Thailand's proposed plan was aimed to enhance demining unit capabilities and prioritize areas near the borders with Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Myanmar. The plan also emphasized collaboration with both domestic and international partners. Thailand was able to address about 338 square kilometers, (93% of the remaining challenge), and declared 11 districts, and 5 provinces mine free. Despite these efforts, approximately 21.78 square kilometers of contaminated land in 15 districts in 6 provinces remained uncleared in the 31 October 2023 deadline.

| Total Progress made since the initial Land Impact Survey | |
|--|---|
| Period/Year | Remaining Mine Contaminated Areas in Thailand (sqm) |
| Initial Landmine Impact Survey | 2,556,700,000 |
| End of the initial operation period (2008) | 528,350,000 |
| End of the first extension (2018) | 360,001,368 |
| 31 OCT 2023 | 21,785,550 |

Phase 4: Completing the Mission (2023- Present)

At the 20th Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention held in Geneva, Thailand was granted a third extension. This permission allows Thailand to focus on clearing the remaining contaminated areas located within the 6 provinces bordering Cambodia.

Remaining challenge: As of 31 October 2023¹, there remains 96 mined areas encompassing approximately 21,785,550 square meters that require clearance, which are not exactly as appears in the extension request. As a consequence, the work plan needs to be adjusted accordingly.

¹ The TMAC developed the Work Plan for 2024-2026 based on the data on 31 October 2023. However, as of 15 April 2024, the contaminated area is reported to remain approximately 19.8 square kilometers.

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Thailand would then focus on the remaining challenge of 21,785,550 square meters in (3) three phases:

- Phase 1 - November 2023 – October 2024: 7,308,874 square meters to be addressed in 5 provinces; Sa Kaeo, Trat, Buri Ram, Surin and Si Sa Ket.
- Phase 2 - November 2024 – October 2025: 7,359,455 square meters to be addressed in 5 provinces; Sa Kaeo, Trat, Surin, Si Sa Ket, and Ubon Ratchathani.
- Phase 3 - November 2025 – December 2026: 7,117,221 square meters to be addressed in 3 provinces, Sa Kaeo, Trat, and Si Sa Ket

2. Adjusted Operation Plan:

Remaining areas for humanitarian demining

The remaining areas that require humanitarian demining operations are located in six provinces of Thailand bordering Cambodia as appears in the Table below.

| Province | District | Total Number of areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines | Total size of areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines (square meters) |
|---------------------|----------------|--|--|
| 1. Ubon Ratchathani | Nam Yuen | 3 | 587,121 |
| | | 3 | 587,121 |
| 2. Si Sa ket | Phu Sing | 14 | 1,310,774 |
| | Kanthalarak | 17 | 3,257,667 |
| | Khun Han | 6 | 1,101,510 |
| | | 37 | 5,669,951 |
| 3. Surin | Kap Choeng | 12 | 2,555,149 |
| | Phnom Dong Rak | 3 | 978,949 |
| | Buachet | 1 | 35,300 |
| | Sang Kha | 6 | 640,128 |
| | | 22 | 4,209,526 |
| 4. Buri-Ram | Ban Kruat | 1 | 158,403 |
| | Lahan Sai | 4 | 108,872 |
| | | 5 | 267,275 |

| | | | |
|------------|---------------|----|------------|
| 5. Sa Kaeo | Ta Phraya | 6 | 2,149,823 |
| | Khok Sung | 2 | 1,287,705 |
| | Aranyaprathet | 2 | 2,440,716 |
| | | 10 | 5,878,244 |
| 6. Trat | Khlong Yai | 6 | 2,390,538 |
| | Mueang Trat | 13 | 2,782,895 |
| | | 19 | 5,173,433 |
| | | 96 | 21,785,550 |

Table 1: 3-Year Plan for Humanitarian Demining and Land Release

- Four provinces of Thailand; namely, Ubon Ratchathani (Nam Yuen District), Sri Sa-ket, Surin, and Buriram, have been heavily mined with landmines laid in an indiscriminate pattern. This dense minefield poses a significant challenge for demining teams due to the high density and lack of pattern, making the clearance process time-consuming and laborious. To further complicate the matters, the Thailand Mine Action Centre (TMAC) has been reportedly requested to stop the operations in the area by the Cambodia Armed Forces.



The Dense random Pattern

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- In Sa Kaeo Province, TMAC discovered a high density of mines along the border and, from time to time, was requested to stop its operations by the Cambodian Armed Forces. However, there was a positive progress when the 16th Meeting of the General Border Committee (GBC) between Thailand and Cambodia in March 2024 acknowledged that both sides shall propose priority areas for humanitarian demining in Sa Kaeo Province of Thailand and Banteay Meanchey Province of Cambodia with the aim to take concrete steps to fulfill both countries' obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC).

- Trat Province presents a unique challenge for demining efforts. The mountainous terrain, characterized by high elevations and dense forests, harbors a high density of landmines laid in an indiscriminate pattern. This combination significantly extends clearance time due to the difficulty of navigating the landscape and the lack of clearance mine placement. While historical operations proceeded without major disruptions, recently the operation team was stopped by the Cambodian Armed Forces from time to time.



Difficult Terrain in Trat

Vision

The ultimate goal of Thailand's mine clearance program is to achieve a mine-free nation, thereby unlocking the full potential of cleared land for national development endeavors.

Mission

Thailand will be a landmine-free nation by 31 December 2026. This goal will be pursued alongside comprehensive mine risk education programs to ensure the safety of Thai communities. Additionally, a commitment to providing continuous and comprehensive support to landmine victims will remain a priority.

Goals and Objectives**Goal 1: A Landmine-Free Thailand by 31 December 2026.**

Thailand is committed to achieving the goal of becoming a landmine-free nation by 31 December 2026. This objective will be realized through a systematic process of land release, guided by the National Mine Action Operation Standard. TMAC spearheads this effort, with its Humanitarian Mine Action Units (HMAUs) playing a crucial role.

HMAUs work diligently to reduce contaminated areas and return safe land to the relevant authorities. This allows the freed land to be utilized for development projects, fostering economic growth and improving the livelihood of Thai citizens.

Goal 2: Enhanced Demining Capacity

Objective 2/1: To expedite the process of creating a mine-free Thailand. Land release will be employed strategically alongside traditional demining methods.

Objective 2/2: To engage in collaborative research and development with international partners to explore cutting-edge technologies.

Goal 3: Cooperative undertaking with the neighboring country for the demining of the border area

Objective 3/1: To maximize our participation in established multi-lateral partnerships across various levels (local, regional, international).

Objective 3/2: To effectuate the implementation of the TMAC-CMAC pilot project and facilitate its expansion to additional regions.

Goal 4: Implement strategies to optimize the efficiency of HMAU and NGO operations.

Objective 4 /1: To adjust the procedure, the process begins with a non-technical survey (NTS) to assess the land. This is followed by a technical survey (TS) and demining by specialized teams to confirm and remove any landmine, expediting the overall land release process.

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Objective 4 /2: To strengthen the capabilities of NGOs and maximize their impact. TMAC seeks the support of international organizations to provide expertise and funding, allowing NGOs to operate with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Goal 5: Mine Risk Education and risk mitigation of local communities

Objective 5: To promote mine risk awareness and equip residents in suspected areas with defensive skills through interactive community-based Mine Risk Education (MRE) activities.

Goal 6: Victim Assistance

Objective 6 : To assist mine victims in enjoying their rights provided by government agencies, including access to healthcare services and rehabilitation, monthly disability allowance ranging from 800-1,000 Baht, in accordance with related laws including the National Health Security Act B.E. 2545 (2002).

Thailand has continued to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities, including through assisting and rehabilitating persons with disabilities. In 1991, Thailand enacted the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act B.E. 2534 (1991). Since then, Thailand has changed the approach from “assistance and rehabilitation” to “empowerment and development”. With the new approach, relevant authorities attach importance to three principles; namely, (1) human dignity, (2) empowerment and (3) removing barriers for disabled persons to enable them to participate fully and equally in the society. In addition, Thailand also works towards eliminating discrimination against persons with disabilities. In 2007, Thailand enacted the Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act B.E. 2550 (2007), with subsequent amendment in 2013. The Act introduced new measures to support and improve quality of life for persons with disabilities as well as access to social welfare and benefits.

Demining area designation and allocation

Ninety-six suspected hazardous areas, spanning 21.78 square kilometers across six provinces (19 districts), have been designated for HMAU operations (details in Table 2). Tailored work plans will address the specific needs and ecosystems of each area (AO) and encompass demining, risk warning, mine risk education (MRE), and victim assistance (VA). Field operations will be carried out in a combined effort between TMAC HMAU, NPA, and TDA.

HMUAs are in charge of conducting a technical survey to locate and clear any remaining landmine in the assigned areas. Their field operations are also supported by demining partners, including NPA and TDA. To ensure the smooth operations and prevent potential misunderstanding or incidents, HMUAs will work on strong working and collaborative relationship with Cambodian Armed Forces in the areas. In case that their operations are stopped by the latter, TMAC will seek

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solutions through existing mechanisms, namely the Regional Border Committee (RBC) and the General Border Committee (GBC) respectively.

| Region | Province | Contaminated Area (Sq.m.) As of 31 DEC 2023 | | | Goal (Sq.m.) | | |
|-------------|------------------|--|-----------|------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | CHA | SHA | Total | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 |
| Northeast | Ubon Ratchathani | 587,121 | - | 587,121 | - | - | 587,121 |
| | Si Sa ket | 3,876,098 | 1,793,853 | 5,669,951 | 1,735,077 | 1,512,047 | 2,458,127 |
| | Surin | 3,137,526 | 1,072,000 | 4,209,526 | 816,602 | 2,399,792 | 957,832 |
| | Buri Ram | 267,275 | - | 267,275 | 267,275 | - | - |
| | Total | 7,868,020 | 2,865,853 | 10,733,873 | 2,818,954 | 3,911,839 | 4,003,080 |
| East | Sa Kaeo | 343,382 | 5,534,862 | 5,878,244 | 2,134,646 | 1,203,082 | 2,540,516 |
| | Trat | 5,173,433 | - | 5,173,433 | 2,355,274 | 2,244,534 | 573,625 |
| | Total | 5,516,815 | 5,534,862 | 11,051,677 | 4,489,920 | 3,447,616 | 3,114,141 |
| Grand Total | | 13,384,835 | 8,400,715 | 21,785,550 | 7,308,874 | 7,359,455 | 7,117,221 |

Table 2: Area of Operations

Recruitment/ Acquiring Operations Personnel

TMAC has allocated a total of 382 personnel positions in Fiscal Year 2024 (FY 2024). This includes staff across various departments: Headquarters, Demining Training Center, Mine Risk Education Center, Explosive Detection Dog Training Center, and TMAC's Humanitarian Mine Action Unit (TMAC HMAU). Of these positions, 245 are dedicated to HMAU 1-4 (Table 3).

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| Name / unit | FY 2023 | | | FY 2024 | | | Decrease | | | Increase | | | Remark |
|----------------|---------|-----|-------|---------|-----|-------|----------|-----|-------|----------|-----|-------|-------------------------|
| | CO | NCO | total | CO | NCO | total | CO | NCO | total | CO | NCO | total | |
| HQ | 30 | 22 | 52 | 30 | 22 | 52 | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| DTC | 12 | 7 | 19 | 12 | 7 | 19 | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| MRE | 5 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 8 | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| EDTC | 5 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 8 | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| TMAC | | | | | | | | | | - | - | - | |
| HMAU | 19 | 66 | 75 | 14 | 36 | 50 | 5 | 30 | 35 | | | | |
| Total | 71 | 101 | 172 | 66 | 71 | 137 | 5 | 30 | 35 | - | - | - | |
| HMAU 1 | 6 | 9 | 15 | 9 | 26 | 35 | - | - | - | 3 | 17 | 20 | Army 1 st |
| HMAU 2 | 11 | 69 | 80 | 11 | 69 | 80 | - | - | - | - | - | - | Navy |
| HMAU 3 | 14 | 86 | 100 | 14 | 81 | 95 | - | 5 | - | - | - | - | Army 2 nd |
| HMAU 4 | 6 | 9 | 15 | 8 | 27 | 35 | - | - | - | 2 | 18 | 20 | Army 3 rd |
| Total | 37 | 173 | 210 | 42 | 203 | 245 | - | 5 | - | 5 | 35 | 40 | |
| Grand Total | 108 | 174 | 382 | 108 | 274 | 382 | 5 | 35 | 40 | 5 | 35 | 40 | |

Table 3: TMAC Operations Personnel Acquisition - FY 2024

Logistics

Procurement of new equipment to replace deteriorated items and equipment maintenance and rehabilitation are essential components of TMAC's operational strategy. By investing in these areas, TMAC can enhance its capabilities, improve cost-effectiveness, and ensure the continued success of its operations. (Table 4: Acquisition and maintenance plan)

| List of equipment | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Vehicle | Maintenance | Maintenance | Maintenance |
| Mine Detector | Maintenance | Maintenance | Maintenance |
| GPS | Maintenance | Maintenance | Maintenance |
| Mine Detector Dog | 8 | | |

Table 4: Acquisition and maintenance plan

Financial Support

TMAC Headquarters anticipates receiving a consistent budget for unit administration, encompassing both HMAU operational and administrative expenses. This budget is expected to remain at the level of 2023 fiscal year of approximately 65 million Thai Baht per year. Additionally, TMAC Headquarters requested supplemental funding from the Royal Thai Armed Forces (RTARF) to address vehicle and ordinance repair and maintenance needs. This request aligns with the directives of the Chief of Defense Forces. Furthermore, the Headquarters is exploring collaboration opportunities with partner nations to alleviate RTARF budgetary burden.

| Unit | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | + / - |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| TMAC | 65,000,000.00 | 65,000,000.00 | - |
| TMAC HQ | 11,668,557.00 | 10,286,657.00 | - 1,381,900.00 |
| Budget for HMAU | 53,331,443.00 | 54,713,343.00 | + 1,381,900.00 |
| HMAU 1 (Army) | 2,822,921.00 | 6,800,409.00 | + 3,977,488.00 |
| HMAU 2 (Navy) | 14,248,315.00 | 14,527,883.00 | + 279,568.00 |
| HMAU 3 (Army) | 17,788,745.00 | 17,443,053.00 | - 345,692.00 |
| HMAU 4 (Army) | 2,821,905.00 | 6,449,905.00 | + 3,628,000.00 |
| TMAC HMAU | 15,649,557.00 | 9,492,093.00 | - 6,157,464.00 |

Table 5: TMAC Budget Comparison: Fiscal Year 2023 vs. Fiscal Year 2024

Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Control (QC)

TMAC Headquarters assigns representatives to participate in an inter-surveying-unit QA monitoring as appropriate. The responsible units or organizations have to conduct the QA and QC in their organizations in accordance with respective internal regulations. In case of declassification of any contaminated area, responsible unit or organization shall invite representatives of related agencies, communities, land users, land owners and other stakeholders to a meeting and to participate in the internal QA and QC (also called participatory QA and QC) at least once. A representative of TMAC Headquarters is also to observe the QA and QC.

Such participatory QA and QC is conducted specifically in a case of declassification of suspected hazardous areas. It is consisted of the following activities:

- 1) Presentation of activities conducted in the areas for stakeholders
- 2) Allocating the area and informing the cause of declassification of its suspected hazardous condition/status;

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3) Q./A.

4) Inviting community members to participate in a declassification survey across the area to reaffirm safety. After the survey, the responsible unit or organization shall provide a participatory QA and QC report, which will be annexed to a report on annulment of the hazardous area.

TMAC Headquarters annually conducts 5 QA to ensure preparedness of the HMAUs and provide advice related to their operations and 8 QC to assess performance of the HMAUs in accordance with the National Mine Action Standard (NMAS).

Principles and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Humanitarian Demining

- Conducting operations in the areas under Thai sovereignty or where Thailand's sovereignty is recognized;
- In case of operational challenges posed by officials from the neighboring country: Document the incident in detail, including the coordinates of the affected area.
- Utilize existing mechanisms and frameworks for discussions at the operational level or between security agencies to address the issue.

Guidelines for Collaboration with Cambodia

1) Thailand consistently complies with its obligations under the Ottawa Convention Article 5, and strives to destroy anti-personnel mines within the extended deadline of 31 December 2026.

2) The 13th Meeting of the GBC between Thailand and Cambodia designated the Thailand Mine Action Centre (TMAC) and the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) as the lead agencies for demining cooperation along their shared border. TMAC and CMAC have agreed to undertake a pilot demining project in Sanon-noi village, Aranyaphathet district, Sa Kaeo province, Thailand, and Kilolaykabuan village, Banteay Srei district, Banteay Meanchey province, Cambodia. (started March – April 2020)

3) Demining is a humanitarian operation aimed at ensuring the safety of citizens of both Thailand and Cambodia, without prejudice to the rights and obligations of both countries concerning their land borders under international law.

4) The Thai side requests for cooperation from the Cambodian side in instructing and informing the military and police units along the border of the intentions of the operation to facilitate the work of TMAC. In this regard, information on the Thai side's operations will be

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coordinated through the Thai-Cambodian Border Coordination Office and the Cambodian - Thai Border Coordination Office.

5) Following the successful pilot project in Sanon-noi village and Kilolaykabuan village, TMAC and CMAC agreed at the 16th Meeting of the GBC between Thailand and Cambodia in March 2024, to seek demining collaboration in additional areas along the Thai-Cambodian border.

Humanitarian demining operations in disputed border areas

As of 1 November 2023, there are still Areas to be Demarcated (AD) included in the remaining contaminated areas in the 6 provinces of Thailand along the border where the humanitarian demining operations require further cooperation with Cambodia.

Since these areas are subject to land boundary survey and demarcation under the MOU between Thailand and Cambodia, access to the border areas may pose security as well as political concerns to the concerned neighbouring country. Thailand will continue to hold consultations with Cambodia under available channels in order to seek mutually agreed solutions for the remaining demining operations. In this regard, Thailand reaffirms that its humanitarian mine action operations will be carried out solely for humanitarian purposes in accordance with its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention, and that such operations shall be without prejudice to the rights of both parties with regard to the land boundary under international law.

Operational Concept for Demining along the Thailand-Cambodia Border

Phase 1: Instructing the Thailand-Cambodia Border Coordination Unit to conduct initial coordination for the deployment of demining operations in areas that can be accessed, taking into account that the operations will not affect the relations between the two countries and be granted with the consent of the border defense forces of both sides.

Phase 2: Instructing the border defense forces of both sides to convene a Regional Border Committee (RBC) meeting to discuss and develop a joint guideline, with the mutual consent of both sides, without prejudice to the boundary issues.

Phase 3: Including demining operation as an agenda for a discussion at meeting of the General Border Committee (GBC) between Thailand and Cambodia to formulate a joint action plan based on the pilot project for demining cooperation along the Thailand-Cambodia border, which was previously implemented in March-April 2020. The discussion may focus on three potential operational models, as follows:

1) TMAC and CMAC will operate in their designated areas while maintaining close coordination to ensure efficient and seamless demining operations along the border.

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2) Through coordinating effort, TMAC and CMAC will only jointly demine the same areas along the border, which will avoid a claim over the area and increasing mistrust of both sides.

3) NGOs from both Thailand and Cambodia can collaborate on demining projects in mutually agreed-upon areas that are not currently under dispute.

Phase 4: Advising the Joint Commission (JC) to reach an agreement on amending existing agreements, particularly the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) 43 signed in 2000, to address the issues in the disputed areas between the two countries.

Phase 5: Recommending the Joint Boundary Commission (JBC) to proceed with the remaining demarcation activities within the areas where the boundary demarcation process has already been completed.

For areas where operations cannot be immediately initiated due to any reason whatsoever, the following procedures should be implemented:

1) Place hazard warning signs around the perimeter of the dangerous areas to indicate the presence of landmines.

2) Create joint patrol paths that facilitate coordinated surveillance by both parties to prevent unauthorized entry into the area by civilians from either side and potential harm from the landmines.

3) Initiate joint demining efforts in the designated area once an agreement and a joint demining strategy have been finalized, prioritizing the safety of civilians from both nations.

Residual Contamination Management (RCM)

1) Perform a thorough post-clearance verification survey to confirm the absence of landmines before transferring cleared areas to the designated authorities. Thailand has already commenced this process in the HMAU 4 jurisdiction, encompassing the northern region of the country.

2) Conduct additional surveys of landmine-contaminated areas that were not initially surveyed in 2000 and proceed with demining operations in those areas. Currently, demining operations are underway in the Kaban Krbai Field, Phrom Dong Rak Wildlife Sanctuary, Ban Bak Dong Subdistrict, Khun Han District, Si Saket Province

3) Implement public safety measures to warn and educate people about the risks posed by landmines in areas that cannot yet be demined (MRE).

4) Deliver ongoing care and assistance to landmine victims, maintaining continuous contact to address their needs and ensure their long-term recovery (VA).

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5) Proactively engage in knowledge-sharing initiatives with neighboring and friendly countries, disseminating expertise in various aspects of humanitarian demining operations at every possible opportunity (Experience sharing).

6) Extend assistance to neighboring and friendly countries whenever feasible, supporting their humanitarian demining efforts to advance global landmine clearance goals.

Gender Equity

To empower women in mine action, TMAC actively supports their participation in MRE, VA, and demining activities. This commitment is evident in their training initiatives. In Q1 FY24, five women participated in international workshops/trainings in Cambodia, China, and Switzerland, gaining valuable expertise. Furthermore, two women will be enrolled in the rigorous 10-week EOD-TMAC course, equipping them with advanced demining skills.

Progress in Bilateral Cooperation Framework with Cambodia

During the official visit of His Excellency Mr. Srettha Thavisin, Prime Minister of Thailand to Cambodia on 28 September 2023, both Prime Ministers concurred to promote border development through expediting humanitarian demining along their border areas to ensure safety of the people and pave the way for development of these areas.

On 25 January 2024, His Excellency Mr. Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, received a courtesy call by His Excellency Mr. Hun Saroeun, Ambassador of Cambodia to Thailand. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand requested through the Ambassador that Cambodia strengthen cooperation with Thailand and expedite the humanitarian demining along the Thai – Cambodian border for the benefit of the peoples of both countries.

Referring to the outcome of discussion between the two Prime Ministers in September 2023, Thailand proposed 10 areas along the border of Sa Kaeo Province of Thailand and Banteay Meanchey Province of Cambodia through diplomatic channel on 5 February 2024, reiterating the Thai side's readiness to work with the Cambodian side towards the fulfillment of the obligation under the Convention.

During the official visit of Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei Hun Manet, Prime Minister of Cambodia, to Thailand on 7 February 2024, the two Prime Ministers pledged to make Thailand - Cambodia border free from landmines. Both leaders agreed to expedite humanitarian demining in pilot areas to make the border areas safe for the people.

At the 16th Meeting of the General Border Committee (GBC) between Cambodia and Thailand on 22 March 2024 in Phnom Penh, both sides acknowledged the urgent need to

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intensify their cooperation in expediting humanitarian demining operations along the border areas. The outcome document of the Meeting demonstrated the progress initiated by the Thai side under the demining section as follows:

6.1 The Meeting reiterated its promotion and support for strong cooperation between Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC) and Thailand Mine Action Center (TMAC) in humanitarian demining along Cambodia - Thailand border in the fulfillment of both countries' obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (APMBC) or the Ottawa Convention and other relevant international laws.

6.2 The Meeting took note that the identification of areas for humanitarian demining operations shall be without prejudice to the rights of Cambodia and Thailand with regard to the land boundary under international law.

6.3 The Meeting welcomed the outcomes of discussion between the Prime Ministers of the two countries during the Thai Prime Minister's official visit to Cambodia on 28 September 2023, in which both leaders confirmed that the humanitarian demining operations shall be without prejudice to the joint survey and demarcation within the framework of Thailand - Cambodia Joint Boundary Commission (JBC) and their legal positions. The Meeting also took note of the Cambodian Prime Minister's official visit to Thailand on 7 February 2024, in which both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to firmly encourage humanitarian demining operations along the Cambodia - Thailand border and tasked the Cambodia - Thailand General Border Committee (GBC) to realize this commitment.

6.4 The Meeting took note of the outcomes of the discussion between the two Prime Ministers of both sides in Bangkok on 7 February 2024, in which the two Prime Ministers acknowledged the importance of humanitarian demining operations to the protection of people's safety. Both Prime Ministers agreed to task relevant authorities of both countries to work closely together through the GBC platform to discuss concrete action plan to clear all landmines in the remaining areas along Cambodia - Thailand border. In addition, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence of Cambodia and the Minister of Defence of Thailand agreed on 1 December 2023 in Phnom Penh to expand the priority areas on

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humanitarian demining along the border of Cambodia and Thailand and reiterate the need for humanitarian demining along the border areas.

6.5 The Meeting acknowledged both sides shall propose priority areas for humanitarian demining in Banteay Meanchey Province of Cambodia and Sa Kaeo Province of Thailand with the aim to take concrete steps to fulfill both countries' obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC).

6.6 The Meeting tasked CMAC and TMAC to establish a joint mechanism, with clear roles and responsibilities defined, to implement humanitarian demining operations along the Cambodia - Thailand border and resolve any Issues arising from such implementation. The joint mechanism shall report work progress and unresolved issues to GBC in each respective country for review and decision.

6.7 The Meeting assigned CMAC and TMAC to cooperate, in accordance with provisions stated in 6.6, on the implementation of the pilot project on humanitarian demining operations along the border of Cambodia and Thailand by prioritizing the areas mentioned in 6.5.

6.8 The Meeting took note of the willingness of the Thai side to provide demining resources for Cambodia's demining efforts and offered support to Cambodia for hosting the 5th Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) where feasible.

6.9 The Meeting agreed to reflect the two countries' commitment to their closer cooperation in humanitarian demining operations along the two sides' border in their respective Work Plans to be submitted to the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) this year as well as to reiterate their commitment at the 5th Review Conference of the Convention in Siem Reap. The Meeting considered that the achievement of Cambodian - Thai cooperation in humanitarian demining along their border would be an epitome of bilateral cooperation in border demining for other countries.

Regional Framework

In addition to the efforts at the bilateral level, Thailand sees the benefits of strengthening cooperation under the regional framework of ASEAN Regional Mine Action

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Centre (ARMAC). In the past years, ARMAC has prioritized regional cooperation, resource mobilization, strengthening gender equality and empowerment, and institutional and staff capacities in the region through on-going projects. Thailand's priority is to include action-oriented cooperation in mine action efforts, including more projects targeting international cooperation through workshops and sharing of best practices with relevant stakeholders, under the Work Plan of ARMAC for 2022-2024. Thailand is currently considering hosting a regional workshop on "Enhancing and Strengthening Cross-Border Humanitarian Mine Action Cooperation" in 2024, a project supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand.

Thailand has also made an effort to push forward the proposal to establish the Guidelines and Action Plan for mine clearance operations in ASEAN, which could be a starting point for cooperation on mine action efforts among ASEAN Member States, especially along the border areas. As proposed by Thailand under ARMAC, the technical working group, comprising the NPA, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and ASEAN Member States, was established for the drafting of the documents. With such Guidelines and Action Plan in place, Thailand aims to work towards translating these two documents into concrete actions through the implementation of pilot projects between interested ASEAN Member States.

Recently, Thailand has agreed to contribute a total of 30,000 USD. for 3 budget years (2024-2026) to ARMAC.

Multilateral framework

In recent years, Thailand has played an active role under the framework of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention as a member of the Committee on Victim Assistance in 2020 – 2021 (the Chair of the Committee in 2021) and a member of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance for the term 2022 – 2023 (the Chair of the Committee in 2023). Currently, Thailand is serving as a member and a gender focal point of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation. Thailand believes that cooperation and assistance under the framework of the Convention, including the "Individualized Approach", could potentially contribute to the success of the mine action efforts and the fulfillment of obligations under Article 5 of the Convention. Thailand believes that the "Individualized Approach" and other relevant activities will help open up venues of cooperation and assistance in support of its demining efforts along the border with Cambodia.

In the 16th Meeting of the GBC between Thailand and Cambodia in March 2024, Thailand demonstrated its support to Cambodia for hosting the 5th Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) where feasible.

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As all the State Parties to the Convention share a common goal of a “mine-free world”, the achievement of Cambodian - Thai cooperation in humanitarian demining along their border, would be an epitome of bilateral cooperation in border demining for other countries.
