

ZIMBABWE'S MINE RISK EDUCATION AND RISK REDUCTION ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

1. Zimbabwe has a robust MRE programme where all operators in conjunction with Zimbabwe Mine Action Centre carryout EORE Sessions within their areas of operations. There is remarkable behavior change among the communities living adjacent to minefields. At national level, we collaborate with traditional leaders, school heads and church leaders to pass the message especially on areas affected by landmines. These are effective platforms for the country and they give a great opportunity to raise awareness to the general populace of Zimbabwe. Regarding Actions 26 to 28, we are pleased to report that the country has made significant progress in strengthening community engagement in Mine Risk Education (MRE) programmes, integrating MRE into education systems, and developing standardised training for Community Focal Persons (CFPs).

Zimbabwe and the Implementation of Actions 26 to 28 of the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan

2. Action 26. Emphasizes the importance of strengthening community engagement in mine risk education programs. By ensuring that affected communities are well informed about the hazards posed by landmines and UXO, Zimbabwe is taking significant steps to mitigate risks. This includes training local leaders and creating culturally relevant educational materials. Operators are actively educating communities through direct Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) presentations, incorporating themes of gender-based violence (GBV) awareness. **T**rainning programmes include local leaders, teachers, youth, women, and individuals with disabilities, empowering them to share this crucial knowledge within their communities. Additionally, community sessions are conducted with different groups including farmers, health practitioners, and religious individuals.

3. Action 27. Highlights the integration of Mine Risk Education into national education systems, ensuring that children and young people are not only aware of the risks but can also disseminate this vital information to their families and peers. Zimbabwe through accredited demining operators have been actively working in schools to educate

students about the dangers of landmines and UXO, fostering a culture of safety among the younger generation. Zimbabwe through operators has published a book called "Happy Readers the Minefield". This book which is being used at schools contains EORE content.

4. Action 28. Focuses on the need for standardized training for educators and community leaders, allowing them to effectively teach Mine Risk Education. This action encourages collaboration with NGOs and international organisations to share resources and best practices. Demining operators have been partnering with the Zimbabwe Mine Action Centre to standardize EORE training for educators, ensuring a consistent and effective approach to risk education across the region. As a demining entity, we have continued our collaboration with existing partners and stakeholders and established a new partnership with Population Services Zimbabwe.

Challenges Faced

5. Zimbabwe encounters significant challenges, particularly in securing adequate funding to support its EORE activities. Limited financial resources hinder the expansion and sustainability of educational initiatives, underscoring the need for increased support to enhance community safety effectively. The lack of sufficient funding hinders our ability to support EORE programmes, including the implementation of Digital EORE, and the development of infrastructure to support such initiatives. Despite these challenges, we are committed to continuing our efforts to enhance EORE in Zimbabwe.

Conclusion

6. As Zimbabwe progresses into the coming years, it is anticipated that the same capacity for delivering these educational programmes will be maintained, allowing for the achievement of comparable targets. This consistency is crucial, as it ensures that vulnerable communities remain informed about mine risks and safety practices, thereby reducing the likelihood of accidents and injuries. By sustaining this capacity, Zimbabwe can continue to build on the successes of previous years, reinforcing the importance of community engagement and awareness in the broader context of mine action efforts. Through regular assessments and adjustments, educational strategies can be refined to meet the

evolving needs of at-risk populations, ensuring that mine risk education remains effective and impactful.