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Thank you very much for offering me the floor. As mentioned, I have the pleasure of directing the Implementation Support Unit of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. We are a small staff that supports the States Parties in implementation of their obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and it is real pleasure to be back here in Harare with all of you.

As many of you may not be familiar with the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, allow me to very briefly sum up the Convention.

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27 years ago, in a unique partnership between civil society and States, States made an important decision to ban the use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of anti-personnel mines and to destroy stockpiles of mines, to address contamination of anti-personnel mines, and to support those that have fallen victim to these weapons.

The reason they came together to do this, was due to the documented evidence of the terrible consequences of their use.

Which unfortunately, Zimbabwe and many countries throughout Africa know too well.

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Firstly, the impact on individuals that fall victim to anti-personnel mines

Individual

Persons killed / Injured
/superfluous injuries

Life-long care

Rights impaired
Social and economic exclusion
Psychological harm
Economic disadvantage

And of course to these respective families.

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Second the terrible harm caused on entire mine contaminated communities.

Community
Return of displaced impeded
Delivery of aid hindered
Reconstruction delayed
Economic development impaired
Investment deterred
Social costs increase

As I mentioned, the evidence collected by many organizations on the impact caused by anti-personnel mines, led States to adopt a humanitarian disarmament to ban anti-personnel mines.

As you can appreciate in the Conventions preamble and the knowledge we have today of the impact of anti-personnel mines, it is clear that the Convention cannot be seen as only a disarmament issues, it is much more than this.

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The landmine issues needs to be seen through

Yes a disarmament lens but also a

- Development
- Human Rights
- Health
- Humanitarian
- Environmental

The Convention therefore provides a comprehensive response to the impact cause by anti-personnel mines.

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The main aim of the Convention is “to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines, as soon as possible”

And it does so through its key provisions which are as follows:

Universalization...

Stockpile Destruction

Victim Assistance

Mine Clearance

Cooperation and Assistance

National Implementation Measures

Transparency

Implementation Support

Zimbabwe has been an important State Party to this Convention and an example for many States to follow. IN fact, I know there is interest of State to come to Zimbabwe to learn from the professional way in which they have implemented several provisions of the Convention.

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- Signed in Ottawa on 3 December 1997, ratified it on 18 June 1998
- Convention entering into force for Zimbabwe on 1 March 1999
- In 2001 Zimbabwe reported completing its obligations under Article 4 to destroy all stockpiled anti-personnel mines
- In 2021 Zimbabwe reported having retains 450 anti-personnel mines for permitted purposes under the Convention
- Zimbabwe has implemented Article 9 by ensuring that national measures are in place to give effect to the Convention to and prevent and suppress any activity prohibited to a State Party
- Zimbabwe has reported mine victims under their jurisdiction or control
- Since the entry into force of the Convention, Zimbabwe has carried out efforts to address mine clearance obligations under Article 5 of the Convention

It is this last issue, that of Zimbabwe's mine clearance obligations, which I would like to focus on for the rest of my presentation

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For those not familiar with Article 5 of the Convention

Each State Party that has reported mined areas under their jurisdiction or control must...

- make every effort to identify all areas under its jurisdiction or control in which anti-personnel mines are known or suspected to be emplaced.
- ensure the effective exclusion of civilians, until all anti-personnel mines contained therein have been destroyed.”
- destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control, as soon as possible but not later than ten years after the entry into force of this Convention for that State Party.”
- If a State Party believes that it will be unable to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines referred to in paragraph 1 within that time period, it may submit a request to a Meeting of the States Parties or a Review Conference for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of such anti-personnel mines, for a period of up to ten years.

Zimbabwe has requested several extensions of its mine clearance deadline. However, this is by no means a failure of Zimbabwe, it is important to recognize the important manner in which Zimbabwe has proceeded in requesting extension.

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Let us recall that a State has the right to request an extension of up to 10 years. However, Zimbabwe took a different path. And I must congratulate Zimbabwe because it was the right path to take.

This picture was taken during my first trip to Zimbabwe in 2007, to visit for my first time the mine action programme in Zimbabwe. I was a young thirty year old and not the 50 years old that is delivering this presentation.

.... In this time, Zimbabwe did not have clarity on its remaining contamination, so it did the right thing, it requested just the period of time to acquire clarity on its contamination before it submitted a plan for completion.

---- However, at this time, Zimbabwe was facing difficulties and was unable to gain clarity during its short extension period. In this regard, it was forced to ask for another request to continue its survey efforts.

----- In the meantime, together with the government of Zimbabwe, we made a call to international operators to support Zimbabwe in addressing its contamination.

----- Things improved massively over the next years as Zimbabwe continued to request short extensions to further its mine action efforts.

----- Today, of course the panorama is much different. Zimbabwe has demonstrated tremendous national ownership of its programme, partnering with some of the best operators in the world to achieve its goal of a mine free Zimbabwe.

----- as you can see, as States have the right to request up to ten years, in 2008, it could have requested only one request until 2018.

In this regard, I must congratulate Zimbabwe for setting a good example for other States in the way it has used the process under the Convention to constantly improve year after year.

In my work --- I often point to Zimbabwe as a good example of implementation.

I am glad to see all the partners represented here today.

With Zimbabwe's deadline approaching, Zimbabwe must present a new request for extension. However, like the last request, Zimbabwe is in a good position to develop a clear and details completion plan.

Allow me to clarify what a request for extension is.

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A request for extension is a detailed document the seeks to answer the following questions :

- What progress has been made since the last request for extension in 2017?
- What remains to be done?

- How much time will be required to complete?
- What is Zimbabwe's plan for addressing the remaining contamination as soon as possible?

Zimbabwe must submit this document by 31 March of this year.

Zimbabwe's demonstrated ownership of its programme indicates to me that this will be the final request that Zimbabwe will require.

However, this is dependent on resources, continued and additional financial support from national and international sources.

This is not the case in other States. It is not only a questions of resources, in many States it is a questions of national ownership, acquiring more clarity on the nature of contamination, development of capacities, access to mined areas.....

This is not the case in Zimbabwe, where these things have been settled. Here is truly only a question of resources.

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Just last year the Convention met for its Fifth Review Conference. The Convention, for those that are not aware, holds a Review Conference every five years to look back at implementation over the last five years and plot the way forward for the next five year.

At the Fifth Review Conference which took place in Cambodia in November 2024.

The States Parties adopted two key documents.

- Siem Reap-Angkor Declaration on a Mine-Free World 2024: A Renewed Commitment for a Safer Future – In which State recommitted to implement the Conventions provisions, including those related to Cooperation and Assistance.
- The Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan 2025 – 2029 was also adopted providing a road map for States in their implementation efforts.

It is now the duty of States Parties to turn this action plan into reality on the ground.

Allow me to share some of the commitments made by States Parties as it relates to Article 5 of the Convention.

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- Detailed, evidence-based, costed, context-specific, and multi-year work plans for survey, clearance, and mine risk education for the extension period
- Develop national work plans in an inclusive manner.
- Prioritization based on clear nationally driven humanitarian and sustainable development criteria
- Sustainable national capacities including survey, clearance, mine risk education
- National Mine Action Standards aligned to International Mine Action Standards
- Centrally managed information management system with accurate and up-to-date data
- Gender, age, disability considerations, and the diverse needs and experiences of women, girls, boys and men in mine-affected communities including mine survivors
- Ensure that climate and environmental considerations inform Convention implementation

All these matters and others from the Siem Reap Angkor Action Plan will need to be considered in Zimbabwe's request for extension.

The Siem Reap Action plan also contains some important actions concerning cooperation and assistance, both for affected States as well as for States in a position to provide assistance.

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- Commit the resources needed to meet their Convention obligations
- Develop resource mobilization plans
- Integrating Convention implementation activities into broader national frameworks

Demonstrate high levels of national ownership, partnership and coordination, by integrating Convention implementation activities into national development plans, strategies and budgets including on poverty reduction, humanitarian response, health and mental health, gender equality, inclusion of persons with disabilities, peacebuilding, Human Rights, climate change adaptation, environmental protection and improvement and/or disaster risk reduction, as appropriate.

- Use all mechanisms to disseminate information on challenges and requirements
- Strengthen national level coordination / national mine action platforms
- States Parties in a position to do so will provide assistance to all States Parties in need of support in implementing national strategies and work plans, including for victim assistance
- Support through multi-year-partnerships and funding
- States Parties in a position to provide assistance will strengthen efforts to effectively coordinate their support for the effective implementation of the Convention

It's important that we implement these actions.

The Extension Request which will be submitted by Zimbabwe by 31 March and will be later considered by the Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention in December of this year— provides important opportunities for all of us.

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- Remove old vestiges of conflict from affected communities
- Completion impact beyond Zimbabwe
- Rally around Zimbabwe to reach the finish line as soon as possible
- Demonstrate that commitment of States Parties and the cooperation and assistance measures of the Convention
- Support States Parties that have demonstrated strong national ownerships
- Thinking about completion / include matters Zimbabwe will need to start considering
- Disseminate detailed work plan and budget and requirements for assistance
- Convention meetings – Individualized Approach / raise awareness of requirements for assistance

The ISU and the machinery of the Convention is committed to support Zimbabwe in this regard.

So dear colleagues

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Someone once said that “If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.”

The beauty of our task to clear the remaining contamination is that it’s finite and achievable in the short term.

And I know that we are all looking forward to a mine free Zimbabwe, and a Zimbabwe where the right of mine survivors and other persons with disabilities is secured.

So thank you very much.