



Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Afghanistan's Statement on Clearing Mined Areas

Third Review Conference of APMBC

Maputo

23 – 27 June 2014

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Afghan delegation, I have the honour of presenting the achievements and challenges faced by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan regarding the implementation of Article Five of the Convention.

In the 12th Meeting of the States Parties, the deadline for Afghanistan regarding Article Five of the Convention was extended until March 2023.

The Extension Request came into being on 1st April 2013, coinciding with the beginning of the Afghan year 1392.

We are in the second year of a 10-year operational plan. For year one of the extension request, the target was to clear 1,034 minefields and battlefields covering an area of 79 sq km. In fact, the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan or MAPA cleared 1,252 minefields and battlefields amounting to an area of 78.1 sq km and 197 sites covering an area of 16.1 sq km. All in all, this represents a progress rate of 119.2% against the target for last year. As a result of this clearance, 19,644 anti-personnel mines, 763 anti-tank mines and over half a million ERW have been destroyed and 314 communities in 33 districts were declared free from all types of known explosive hazards. Afghans have a proverb that says "A good spring is indicative of a good year", so exceeding the first year's target leaves us in the favourable position of knowing that our operational plan from now until 2023 is realistic.

In the same period above, 700,050 Afghans, including men, women, boys and girls received mine and ERW risk education.

For year two of the extension request, the target is to clear 810 minefields and battlefields covering an area of 83 sq km. Progress in the first month of Year Two indicates that we are on track to achieve this.

Please note that a two-year national non-technical survey, which was part of the Extension Request, is being implemented in Afghanistan since May 2012. This is to validate the Landmine Impact Survey and other survey information in the national database that was collected prior to 2005.

The objective of this survey is to visit every community in Afghanistan, whether impacted or not. The results of this non-technical survey are important, as this will ensure that all the data is captured and that the available data on the impact of mines and ERW is accurate and updated in the National Database.

The plan was to visit 468 impacted communities and 9,857 non impacted communities in the period from 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014. Non-impacted communities are visited to ensure they are really free from explosive hazards. During this period, 452 impacted communities and 21,904 non-impacted communities were visited. It is worth mentioning that during survey operations, 12,615 new communities that previously were not in the Gazetteer were also covered.

During the reported period, 152 hazards with an area of 12.4 sq km were cancelled as result of the survey, while 543 hazards with an area of 53 sq km were discovered, having been missed by previous surveys.

We have revised the budget for the extension request as a result of several reviews of the operational plan and improvements in demining techniques. The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan strives endlessly to continually improve its demining techniques.

A recent trial on the application of mechanical demining operations and the adjustment of manual demining teams' productivity based on their recent achievements showed that we can achieve a higher productivity rate than was initially anticipated in the extension request. Based on these revised productivity rates, we recalculated the budget for our 10 year work plan, bringing the overall cost of the Extension Request from the USD 544 540 million that was estimated at the time of submission to USD 434 460 million; a reduction of USD 110 80 million. The budget for the first year fell from USD 87 74 million to USD 73 70 million. This is definitely good news for both the GIRoA and the donor community.

Having said that, the programme still requires USD 45 million out of the USD 76.9 million for this year of the Extension Request.

On behalf of my Government, I would like to thank the people and Governments of donor countries for their generous contributions in support of the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan. I would like to

name them here: The United States of America is [the](#) MAPA's biggest donor. Other donors include Japan, Germany, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden, Netherland, Finland, Ireland, Norway, UAE, Belgium, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Korea, Oman, Austria, Luxembourg, [Poland](#) and Lithuania.

I would also like to provide some information about the achievements of MAPA since the second review conference of the APMBC:

- 5400 hazards with an area of 310 sq km areas were cleared of mines and 465 battlefield covering an area of 149 sq km were cleared of ERW. As a result, 1,029 communities and 81 districts were declared entirely free of mines and ERW
- over 100,000 AP mines, 5,800 AT mines and over 3.5 million items of ERW were destroyed
- 3.8 million Afghans were provided with mine and ERW risk education
- MAPA has now applied a project management approach to its planning and operations. The projectisation of mine action in Afghanistan has resulted in improvements in reporting to different stakeholders.
- Demining teams were restructured and many of them cross trained in different demining functions – for example, survey teams were trained in EOD and M/ERW RE in order to remove spot ERW and provide M/ERW RE during survey operations
- Effectively engaged IPs in planning and priority setting process – as a result MAPA planning and priority setting processes improved significantly
- We launched the community based demining approach based on which deminers are recruited from the affected communities; they are trained and deployed to clear their own communities' hazards. The community-based approach has helped to deliver demining in insecure parts of the country.
- We implemented three landmine and livelihood surveys and five PDIA projects. This helped us to measure the socio-economic impact of mine action interventions and to continually improve MAPA's priority setting process
- We mainstreamed monitoring and evaluation across all IPs by launching the Balanced Scorecard, which assess partners on their project implementation, the number of accidents, among other factors.
- To improve resource allocation, we designed a systematic resource allocation and proposal review system that promotes effectiveness and efficiency within the MAPA

Notwithstanding the achievements we had in year one of the extension request, insecurity resulting from the ongoing conflict remains a major challenge for the implementation of Article Five of the Convention in my country. It is not only impeding the smooth delivery of demining services in some parts of the country but it has also left behind new ERW contamination in battlefields and military firing ranges.

Thank you all for your attention.