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**Cartagena de Indias, 30 November-4 December 2009**

Item 11 of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of submissions of States Parties  
as provided for in Article 5**

**REQUEST FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE DEADLINE FOR  
COMPLETING THE DESTRUCTION OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 5 OF THE CONVENTION,  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Submitted by Cambodia\*

1. Cambodia's landmine problem is the result of a protracted sequence of internal and regional conflicts that affected the country from the late 1960s until the end of 1998. The nature of landmine and unexploded ordnance contamination in Cambodia is highly complex. The northwest regions bordering Thailand are heavily affected, while other parts of the country are considered moderate to low. It was originally estimated that somewhere around four to six million landmines were laid during conflicts. The country is also heavily affected by other explosive remnants of war (ERW) due to aerial bombing and ground battles. Mines and other ERW have caused an unacceptable number of casualties, both military and civilian, which peaked at 4,320 in 1996.

2. Cambodia officially started humanitarian mine clearance in 1992. However, clearance of the Cambodian-Vietnamese border region began as early as 1979. By 1998, demining was at full throttle, with four demining operators, the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF), the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC), Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and the HALO Trust all conducting clearance operations. On 28 July 1999, Cambodia ratified the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), and the Convention entered into force on 1 January 2000.

3. Early in Cambodian mine action, surveys and clearance requests were the means employed to identify areas with landmine contamination. However, when Cambodia began to focus on longer-term development goals, the need for a more systematic and holistic approach to mine action management arose. In order to ascertain and quantify the full scope of the country's landmine problem, a Level One Survey (L1S) was undertaken between late 2000 and April 2002.

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\* Submitted after due date and as soon as received by the Secretariat.

The completed L1S identified 4,544 square kilometres contaminated with mine and other ERW, affecting 6,416 villages (out of 13,910 villages) – or 46.1 percent of all villages. Contamination was suspected in each of Cambodia's 24 provinces.

4. Mines have had a huge negative humanitarian, social and economic impact on Cambodia, leading to mine action being integrated into the Cambodian Government's major national development policies and strategies and added as an additional Cambodian Millennium Development Goal (MDG9). Despite the optimistic view that the L1S would provide a clear map of areas containing anti-personnel mines, it soon became apparent through subsequent survey activities by operators that there were also other mined areas sitting outside the L1S, and that some of the L1S polygons were unrealistically large. The problems emanating from this situation are widely recognized, and continue to become more clearly understood as time passes.

5. To ensure demining resources were targeting contaminated areas, an innovative mine action planning mechanism was introduced which facilitates both community and demining operator inputs into prioritization of mine clearance plans (known as the MAPU process). In order to greater address risk reduction the Community-Based Mine Risk Reduction (CBMRR) network was introduced in 2001. The last few years have seen an emergence of new, meaningful mine action initiatives. In 2006, an Area Reduction Policy was initiated in recognition that much of the L1S needed to be reclassified. The Area Reduction Policy aimed to develop agreed protocols and standards through which area that was previously classified as suspect, but which had been in productive use without incident, could be reclassified within the national database. Taking this initiative one step further, Cambodia is currently developing a land release policy which provides a framework that encourages greater use of land release methodologies and tools in order to accelerate the release of safe land to communities.

6. As mine action evolved, stronger systems and structures emerged. The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) in September 2000 established the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) to regulate and coordinate mine action activities throughout Cambodia. The CMAA has established a number of policies and guidelines for the management of the mine action programme in Cambodia and is striving to enhance mechanisms to improve coordination of the mine action sector.

7. The Cambodian mine action sector has achieved remarkable results from 1992 to 2008, thanks to a combination of all operators' demining activities with efforts from stakeholders in the sector. The three humanitarian demining operators CMAC, MAG and the Halo Trust have cleared 305,863,922 square metres of land across 7,589 mined areas resulting in substantial socio-economic benefits. In addition, the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces reports the clearance of 170,640,882 square metres. In total, from 1992 until 2008, CMAC, MAG, HALO Trust and the RCAF combined, report having cleared 814,198 anti-personnel mines, 19,109 anti-tank mines and 1,740,831 other ERW as part of their demining activities. Overall, huge amount of suspected land has been released for productive use - including the safe resettlement of

thousands of refugees and internally displaced people (IDP) - and to enable social and physical infrastructure reconstruction and development to begin.

8. Since 1992, operators, guided by their own standing operating procedures (SOPs), have been using clearance and survey methods to release suspect mined areas. In 2005, the CMAA began developing the Cambodian Mine Action Standards (CMAS) and six CMAA quality assurance teams are currently monitoring that standards are being applied by the operators in accordance with CMAS.

9. However, despite some noticeable successes, Cambodia is still challenged by a serious contamination problem, and thus the necessity to ensure that precious mine clearance assets are directed to those areas that need it the most. The considerable casualty reduction, 271 cases in 2008, down from 4,320 cases in 1996, demonstrates that the mine action sector contribution in Cambodia has been essential. However, this does not disguise the fact that there is a large problem that has a significant impact on both national and local development priorities.

10. It remains clear that international support must be maintained in order to assist Cambodia's mine action efforts to support poverty reduction and economic growth whilst complying with its international obligations. Cambodia has benefited greatly from sustained and significant contributions from the international community to fund mine action activities since 1992. The overwhelming majority of mine action funding has been directed to mine clearance, but significant contributions have also been made to mine risk education (MRE), victim assistance, mine action governance, integrated mine action programmes, and research and development. While Cambodia remains a developing country with great pressure on its national budget to address a wide range of different needs, the RGC has managed in recent years to increase its budget allocation to mine action.

11. Cambodia requires an extension of its deadline to enable meeting the APMBC's Article 5 obligation due to the high level of contamination. However, even within this extension period, adverse circumstances could severely impede Cambodia's efforts. Sustained funding combined with maximizing land release methodologies will assist Cambodia to comply with its international obligations.

12. The contribution of Cambodia's mine action program since 1992 to the social and economic situation of people living in affected areas is considerable. This occurred primarily through clearing land with a purpose of reducing casualties and providing safe land for resettlement, agriculture activities and enhanced livelihoods for poor and vulnerable people.

13. Addressing the next 10 years begins with a new effort to quantify the remaining landmine problem. In August 2009, a Baseline Survey (BLS) commenced which aims to supersede previous LIS contamination and to define remaining contamination through a national land

classification system. The findings of the BLS will complement the MAPU system and enhance planning and prioritisation that should see clearance assets targeted where the greatest needs are. Survey of the 21 most mine-affected districts shall be completed by December 2010 and will be followed by subsequent phases which will cover all remaining districts by December 2012.

14. The Baseline Survey is a major milestone in clarifying the remaining contamination in Cambodia. However, its results will not be available in time for the submission of this extension request. Therefore, the CMAA has developed a nationally owned methodology to derive an estimate of the remaining contamination that takes into account the broad knowledge and experience of all operators involved in Cambodia. The CMAA recognizes that the remaining contamination remains an estimate but has strived to demonstrate how this situation will be solved. In an effort to keep States Parties of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention informed, Cambodia will provide updates on regular basis on Baseline Survey achievements and subsequent reviews of work plans.

15. According to Cambodia's projection, 648.8 square kilometres remain mine affected and will need to be addressed over the next ten-year period. The Baseline Survey will refine the projection by capturing all known contamination and superseding all previous recorded contamination. Based on the current productivity levels, Cambodia estimates that demining undertaken by the three operators combined can achieve 470 square kilometres which will require approximately US\$ 330 million. This demonstrates that current productivity levels will not be sufficient to fulfil Article 5 within the next ten years. However, with a 38 percent increase of financial resources made available to the sector and a greater involvement of the RCAF in addressing the remaining challenge, productivity rates can be increased which may make completion of clearance of all known minefields within the extension period possible.

16. Cambodia is seeking a ten-year extension, commencing in January 2010 and concluding in December 2019. Within the ten-year extension period, Cambodia commits to undertake a number of activities that will support achieving the goals of the APMBC Article 5 obligation. Cambodia aims at identifying all remaining mine contaminated areas and at releasing land through clearance and survey with a primary focus on casualty reduction and poverty alleviation.

17. In order to meet the obligations Cambodia has come up with the following activities that form an indicative work plan for the extension period:

- a) A Baseline Survey (BLS) commenced in August 2009 which will capture by the end of 2012 all remaining mined areas in the 122 affected districts recorded by the LIS.
- b) Cambodia will improve the use of land release including the development of a national policy and CMAS on Land Release. The ultimate aim of land release is to convert mined or suspected land into an end state land implying that the land can safely be used.

- c) Cambodia will finalise a National Mine Action Strategy (NMAS) by the end of 2009 in support of the goals of the National Strategic Development Plan as well as Cambodia's APMBC obligations.
  - d) Accreditation of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) will be completed by the end of 2009.
  - e) Cambodia will enhance the existing planning and prioritization system to incorporate the use of BLS findings and to support the goals of the NMAS and the Extension Request.
  - f) Cambodia will improve mine action information management to support strategic planning and prioritization of demining activities.
  - g) Cambodia will formulate annual clearance work plan to target resources and monitor progress against the NMAS and the extension request.
  - h) Cambodia will clear all identified mined areas.
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