



ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN  
OFFICE OF THE STATE MINISTER FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

## **Afghanistan Statement on Clearance (Article five APMBC)**

**APMBC States Parties Meeting  
28 Nov – 1 Dec 2016, Santiago, Chile**

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

On behalf of the Afghan delegation, I have the honour of presenting the achievements of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in fulfilling its commitments under the Article Five of the Convention, and the challenges it continues to face. Since 1989, the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan has addressed 73 percent of the mine and ERW problem. However, 4,118 minefields, covering 606.8 square kilometres are yet to be cleared, and continue to affect 1,564 communities, 258 districts, in 33 provinces.

Beside the legacy contamination before 2001, ongoing armed conflicts compound the problem by leaving behind ERWs and IEDs. Data suggests that between January and August, 2016, a monthly average of 142 Afghan civilians were killed or injured in explosive hazard accidents. Of this figure, Pressure Plate IEDs accounted for 57.9 percent. Beside security and funding shortfall, increasing use of Pressure Plate IEDs by insurgents and contamination of areas by ERW as a result of ongoing armed conflicts are another challenges faced by the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan was granted a ten-year extension to the deadline to complete the removal of all anti-personnel mines by 2023. We are now in the fourth year of the Extension Work Plan. Although we achieved the clearance target for year one, 2013, achievements respectively were only 69.8% of the target for year two and 65 % of the year three due to a shortfall in funding. The insufficient funding casts a shadow over clearance progress this year as well, considering only 36 percent of the required annual

budget has been secured, eight months into Afghan operational year. In the first seven months of the current operational year, the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan cleared 28.2 square kilometres of minefields, which accounts for 31 percent of the annual target.

Another component specified in Afghanistan's Extension Request Work Plan to the Ottawa Treaty is a nationwide general survey, which aims at obtaining the most recent information on the mine/ERW contamination and related issues in every village. It includes non-technical survey, immediate destruction of identified ERW, as well as communication of key mine/ERW risk education messages to the communities. The survey, since its beginning in 2013, identified 1,482 hazardous areas covering 165.8 square kilometres, and they have been subsequently added to the national database. These areas extend over 1,243 communities and 163 districts that had remained unidentified in the past surveys.

The mine action programme of Afghanistan systematically seeks to identify and deliver innovative Mine and ERW Risk Education to men, women, girls and boys for the communities who live at the impacted communities. This will include provision of MRE through radio/TV spots. The USDOS, Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PMWRA) has pledged to support this project.

Since beginning of 2015, the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination of the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority become member of the Civilian Casualties Mitigation Board of the National Security Council. This forum meets every quarter to identify ways and to take measures for mitigating the risks of ongoing armed conflicts on civilians. The threats posed by mines, ERW and IEDs have been recognised as one of the major challenges by the board. The board also realises that dealing with the problems of mines, ERW and IED needs a joint effort by many relevant players including government ministries/departments, civil society organisations, United Nations and media. H.E President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani recently tasked the National Security Council to work with the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination of the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority to identify the communities who are at "high risk" due to presence of mines, ERW and IEDs, left in the areas from ongoing armed conflicts. The Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior have provided the list of battle areas based on which the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination along with Operators are working on a proposal for survey and clearance of these areas and it will be submitted to the National Security Council very soon.

The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan is committed to apply continual improvements to its processes and procedures at all time to attain effectiveness and efficiency. MAPA regularly conducts

studies and trials to identify best practices, methods and approaches. At present, the MAPA are conducting trials on the non-technical and technical surveys for better identification of the minefields parameters, clearance of big antitank contaminated areas, Post Demining Impact Assessments and Landmine and Livelihood Surveys. Our national mine action standards are regularly revised in the light of findings from these trials. Moreover, the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination with support from UNMAS developed a survey policy based on which the work of operators who are carrying out non-technical surveys will be regulated.

For the Government, mine action remains a priority as a cross-cutting issue and prerequisite for the nation's recovery and development. The commitment of the Government is reflected in the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework presented in Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in October 2016, in the National Programme Priorities and in SDG indicators. It is also worth mentioning that the Afghan Government has recently ratified the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons with all its protocols including the amended protocol two. We believe that the ratification of the convention, particularly the protocol two and five, is an indication that the Afghan Government recognises the needs and importance of mine action, and will further promote and strengthen the efforts made by the mine action partners and government's relevant ministries toward achieving the goal of making Afghanistan free of mines and ERWs by 2023.

On behalf of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 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. The main donors for Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan are the United States of America, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Canada, Japan, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Ireland. associate

Thank you all for your attention.