

ZIMAC UPDATE TO THE 15MSP ON 27-01 DECEMBER 2016, SANTIAGO, CHILE.

INTRODUCTION

1. Madam President, allow me to express my delegation's sincere thanks to the Government and people of Chile for the excellent reception and hospitality that they have extended to us since our arrival in this beautiful City of Santiago. Madam President, it is my singular honour and privilege to update this meeting on the progress made so far with regards Zimbabwe's implementation of her mine action endeavours to fulfil her Article 5 obligation.

2. Madam President, like most States Parties that were involved in the negotiation of this Convention, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty (APMBT) entered into force for Zimbabwe in 1999. As most of us are aware, Zimbabwe was unable to fulfil her Article 5 Obligation by the expiry of her ten year deadline in March 2009 due to lack of international support. Since then the country has applied and was granted four(4) extension periods. Madam President, you will recall that the current fourth extension period of three (3) years was granted during the Third Review Conference in June 2014 in Maputo.** Zimbabwe was granted the fourth extension period, which expires January 2018, on condition that among other things, ***she resurveys of all mined areas to ascertain the extent of the remaining contamination, draws up a National Strategic Plan to deal with the remaining contamination and requests another extension of reasonable period envisaged to last until completion of the remaining contamination.*** Furthermore the Zimbabwe Mine Action Centre (ZIMAC) was expected to have been relocated from the military cantonment area, where it is currently located, to a place outside the cantonment, where it can be easily accessible to all mine action stakeholders.

3. Madam President, this meeting has come at a time when Zimbabwe is preparing its 5th extension request and National Strategic Plan, based on the established extent of contamination revealed by the resurvey. Armed with information on the remaining contamination and the current clearing capacity, Zimbabwe is setting for itself a realistic target period to complete the task.

4. Great progress has been made in Zimbabwe, Madam President, since the 14MSP to date. **After completing the Non Technical Survey (NTS), which cancelled large swathes of land, the focus is now on Technical Survey (TS) and clearance. There has been extensive capacity building by all operators. Demining operations continue to be conducted from three minefields by the National Mine Clearance Unit (NMC), HALO Trust and Norwegian People's Aid. Two more International Demining NGOs, Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and Apopo are now set to commence operations in the coming year following the approval of their applications for registration as Private Voluntary Organisations (PVOs) on Friday last week. On the other hand, the ICRC continues to offer valued assistance to the NMC Unit and ZIMAC office.

PROGRESS TO DATE

5. I am pleased to announce, Madam President, that Zimbabwe has made great strides in implementing her Article 5 obligations by addressing matters raised on the previous and current extension periods. These cover re-surveys, land release and clearance of the remaining contaminated land, Capacity Building, Mine Risk Education, Victim Assistance and National Strategic Plan.

RE-SURVEY OF THE REMAINING MINED AREAS

6. Madam President, I am honoured to inform this meeting that Zimbabwe has since completed re-surveys, one of the requirements for being granted the forth extension period. From the Non Technical Surveys (NTS) conducted by Halo Trust, NPA, and the NMC Unit, it is

now clear that the initial contaminated area was **180 819 072m²** distributed as shown on the Zimbabwe map below.

MINEFIELD CLEARANCE AND LAND RELEASE

7. Madam President, of the Confirmed Hazardous Area (CHA) stated above of **180 819 072m²**, **107 250 288m²** has since been released by either NTS or manual clearance recovering and destroying **78 437 AP** mines as at 31 October 2016.

8. **The cumulative remaining mined land in Zimbabwe as at 21 November 2016, was 73 568 784m².** Madam President, there have been remarkable continued positive developments in demining operations throughout the country as detailed below.

a. **National Mine Clearance Squadron.** Madam President, the NMC increased its capacity from 120 to 150 deminers in 2016. In terms of its working progress, the National Mine Clearance Unit has, since its completion of clearance of the **12,37km²** double stretch minefield from Limpopo to Mwenezi River in December 2014, embarked on the clearance of one of the two stretches from Mwenezi River to Sango Border (the reinforced Ploughshare part of the minefield). Post clearance risk assessments on the completed area are underway to match the land use to the level of residual risk. Madam President, out of the initial mined area of **21 259 616m²**, a total of **3 967 518m²** have so far been released and **488 APs** were recovered. The other stretch of Cordon Sanitare minefield covering an area of **7 196 038m²** has since been allocated to APOPO that is set to commence demining the area in January 2017.

b. **Norwegian People's Aid.** Madam President, the NPA completed the **636 821m²** Burma Valley Minefield in March 2015 and ZIMAC did the Quality Control (QC) in April same year. Handover was done on 09 July 2015. NPA deminers are currently clearing the Sheba Forest to Leacon Hill minefield. By 31 October 2016, a total of **884 838m²** of the initial contamination of **8 231 200m²** had been cleared and **6 218 AP** mines were recovered and destroyed. The increase in annual output has been attributed

to an increase in the total number of deminers from 48 in 2015 to 70 in 2016. Further increase in capacity is expected in the coming year.

c. **HALO Trust.** Madam President, clearance of the Musengezi to Rwenya minefield by HALO Trust has increased significantly since commencement of operations. By 31 October 2015, a total area of **609 665m²** had been cleared and **10 237** anti-personnel mines were recovered and destroyed. Madam President, the HALO Trust has since increased capacity from 90 deminers in 2014 to 240 as at 31 Oct 2016. This has seen the output figures rising to **1 391 047m²** released and a total of **23 447 APs** being recovered and destroyed since during the course of operations up to 31 Oct 2016. ZIMAC has done its QC in all these cleared areas. Handover is expected once a few remaining portions are addressed.

MINE RISK EDUCATION (MRE)

9. Madam President, Zimbabwe has done much in terms of educating the public and reducing the risk of unaware individuals falling victims. At national level, awareness is conducted through participation at the Harare Agricultural Show (HAS) and Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF). This however cascades down to Provincial and District Agricultural Shows. The Centre has also been conducting Mine Risk Education (MRE) in partnership with the ICRC in areas adjacent to the minefields. A remarkable event was the MRE week in May 2016, which culminated into a Musical Gala held in the Dumisa operational area of the NMC in the Gonarezhou National Park general area. This attracted a crowd of approximately 3000 locals. MRE materials supplied by ICRC and the Zimbabwe National Army, were distributed.

10. Madam President, the National Mine Clearance Squadron, the HALO Trust and Norwegian People's Aid continue to carryout community liaison in the communities living along the confirmed mined areas in their respective task areas. ZIMAC looks forward to a continued marriage with the ICRC to keep on eliminating dangers exposed by the

mines and Explosive Remnants of War to the people of Zimbabwe through MRE.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE

11. Victim Assistance in Zimbabwe, Madam President is the responsibility of the Department of Social Welfare in the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. The Department works in close collaboration with ZIMAC in identifying the mine victims. The operators including the NMC Unit, identify mine victims in their areas of operation and render assistance where possible. A good example is when HALO Trust bought prosthetics for 36 mine victims in the year 2015.

CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT

12. Madam President, Zimbabwe continues to engage the International Community and other States Parties for assistance and support in order to fulfil her Article 5 obligations. Through partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the capacity of the NMC Unit has been enhanced through provision of demining equipment and training support both locally and internationally for ZIMAC and NMC staff. Zimbabwe recently engaged two more operators in the mould of Apopo and MAG who are set to commence their programmes early next year 2017. This positive development, will see production increasing, thereby enhancing the chances of completing the task earlier than expected.

Madam President, there has been remarkable progress in capacity building by all operators as follows;

- a. **NMC Unit.** As already alluded to, the Unit increased its deminers' strength from 120 to 150 deminers, with equipment provided by ICRC in May 2016. Plans are afoot to further increase the demining capacity once resources are available.

b. **HALO Trust.** The organisation has increased capacity during the period under review from 90 deminers in 2014 to 240 as at 31 Oct 2016. This was made possible by the increased funding from its donors.

c. **NPA.** Like the other two, NPA also increased the number of its deminers from 48 in 2015 to 70 in 2016. Further increase in capacity is expected in the coming year in relation to expected increase in funding.

ARTICLE 5 OBLIGATION

13. Zimbabwe remains committed to her Article 5 obligations. the current extension period expires in January 2018 and by then a new and realistic extension period will have been sought and hopefully granted. Before a new extension is sought, the country will review its National Mine Action Strategic Plan, which shall set parameters and timeframes for the period to be requested. The National Strategic Plan workshop is scheduled for 13 to 16 December 2016 with support from the Geneva Centre for International Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

CONCLUSION

14. In conclusion, Madam President, with the engagement of two more operators, Zimbabwe's rate of clearance is certainly set to increase significantly to enable her to meet the set deadlines. Zimbabwe remains committed to her Article 5 obligations and cherishes the support rendered by other State Parties and the GICHD in her mine action endeavours. Together we will defeat the mines and have a mine free Zimbabwe and mine free world by 2025.

I thank you