



ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN
Directorate of Mine Action Coordination
Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority

Afghanistan's Statement on Clearance (Article five APMBC)

**APMBC MSPs
18-21 December 2017, Vienna, Austria**

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Afghan delegation, I am pleased to present the achievements and the challenges of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in fulfilling its commitments under the Article Five of the Convention.

The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) since its establishment in 1988 has cleared some 18,271,224 Explosive Remnants of War, 730,242 anti-personnel mines laid before 2002, and 29,756 anti-tank mines laid before 2002.

In addition, some 752 improvised landmines laid by non-state groups have been cleared since 2010; we believe that there are thousands of these new improvised landmines littering the ground in Afghanistan. We are working

with our partners in the humanitarian mine clearance community to come up with ways to clear abandoned new mines under the rubric of the MAPA, and thus in the best tradition of the impartial and neutral approach that the MAPA is known for throughout Afghanistan. All Afghans appreciate the noble struggle of the Afghan deminers; I wish to pay tribute to them here. I would also note that non-abandoned explosive devices, including some landmines, are separately addresses by our armed forces.

These clearance figures represent tremendous achievements by the MAPA and encompass 79 percent of known legacy contamination in the country. Despite this, Afghanistan remains one of the most heavily contaminated countries in the world. 3,933 minefields, covering 547 square kilometres remain contaminated and continue to affect 1,437 communities, 255 districts, in all but of the 34 provinces of the Afghanistan. The remaining 22 percent (547 KM2) of recorded contamination presents a significant challenge and not only causes people to lose their lives and limbs, but also impedes development by delaying new road networks, transmission lines, mineral mines and IDP and returnee settlements.

In addition, the extent of new and unrecorded contamination from the current conflicts is also not fully determined. This having been said, we know that on average some 180 Afghan civilians lose their lives or get injured by landmines and ERW every month. This is perhaps the highest casualty rate

as a result landmine and ERW detonations in the world this year. Sadly, children comprise 84 percent of civilian casualties caused by mines and ERW, making it the second only to ground engagements as a cause of child casualties due to armed violence in Afghanistan. Given the increasing civilian casualties, humanitarian mine action needs in the country are as great now as they were when we joined the Ottawa Convention in 2003.

Afghanistan has a detailed work plan to achieve mine-free status by 2023. We are now in the fifth year of the Extension Work Plan. Although we achieved the clearance target for the first year, 2013, achievements respectively were only 69.8% of the target for year two, 65 % for year three and 54% of the target for year 4.

Looking at the targets achieved over the last few years, it is clear that we are failing to meet the annual target. The reason for this is mainly due to lack of sufficient funds. The programme structure and its specialised and professional capacity are all in place enabling us to deliver on our planned targets, although, as I mentioned, new challenges are also emerging, which add to our humanitarian clearance burden.

To give you an example, MAPA's funding target for 2017 is USD 110.1 million, of which USD 43.2 million has so far been secured. This is approximately 40% of our funding target for 2017. Given that we are

approaching the end of the year, our funding target is unlikely to be bridged at this stage of the year.

Today, MAPA is not just highly effective, it is also cost-efficient, delivering positive value for money in what is recognised as one the most difficult operating environments in the world.

The MAPA systematically seeks to identify and deliver innovative Mine Risk Education to the communities who live in the impacted areas. This includes provision of MRE through radio/TV spots. Recently a risk education workshop brought together the MAPA implementing partners and stakeholders to review the existing process of mine risk education, its methodology and materials. The risk education workshop aimed to find ways of providing tailored risk education to the affected communities based on emerging local needs, evolving conflict dynamics and thus the changing patterns of risks.

Finally, on behalf of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, we gratefully acknowledge the financial contributions of all donors and the technical support of the UNMAS.

Thank you all for your attention.