

**STATEMENT OF CAMBODIA**

**by**

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**To**

**The 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the States Parties**

to the Ottawa Conference of the Convention on the  
Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines  
and on Their Destruction.

Dead Sea – Jordan

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Your Royal Highness,

Mr. President

First allow me to extend the Cambodian Delegation's warmest congratulations to you on your election to the Presidency of the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties. I would also like to express our deep appreciation to the Royal Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for its significant contribution in hosting this Conference.

Mr. President:

The Kingdom of Cambodia is one of the most landmine affected countries in the world, due to almost three decades of conflict and several years of aerial bombing and shelling. For this reason Cambodia is indeed committed to the Ottawa Convention as we know firsthand the suffering caused by these indiscriminate killers.

If I may take a moment to remind the Conference about the scale of the landmine/UXO problem in Cambodia, the Landmine Impact Survey completed in 2002 identified 4466 sq km as potentially contaminated. This represents 2.5% the country, or over 1600 villages. In the absence of definitive technical survey information, the Royal Government of Cambodia has used a reduced figure of approximately 10% of this to represent the high priority areas requiring the most immediate attention.

To further refine this figure, Cambodia has been very proactive in promoting sensible approaches to area reduction. Each of the three main operators are actively supporting this initiative under the guidance of the Area Reduction Policy issued by the CMAA in 2006.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to update the meeting on the progress made in clearing contaminated areas in accordance with our Article 5 obligations since the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the States Parties. During 2006, almost 52 million sqm has been cleared by the four operators working in Cambodia. The majority of this was high priority land cleared to support development objectives, while some cleared by Royal Cambodian Armed Forces was in less contaminated areas but in support of national infrastructure projects. This represents a significant increase over 2005, when approximately 39 million sqm were cleared.

In addition, huge improvements have been made in the implementation in the area reduction policy. Through a variety of techniques, over 200 million sqm was identified as low risk during 2006, and this number will like increase substantially in 2007. Cambodia believes that effective and safe management of the land release process will be critical to its ability to target mine clearance resources more effectively and work towards its Article 5 obligations.

In parallel with the above, mine risk education has become more targeted. One major development over the last 1-2 years has been the active involvement of the national police in MRE. Along with the 4 operators, they have an extensive network to work through at the community level, and have been very effective in combating the riskier results of the trade in scrap metal. As well as educating the community about the risks and laws to do with ERW, they have also collected over 53,000 pieces of ERW in the last 16 months. Additionally, the active involvement of all operators in MRE in communities has had demonstrated results. Finally, during the time since the last meeting of States Parties, the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority has taken a much more direct and active role in coordinating and guiding organizations

delivering MRE and this has made improvements in reducing overlaps and ensuring that all areas are adequately covered.

The results of these positive developments can be seen in the dramatic drop in casualties seen in 2006 and 2007. From 2000 to 2005, there was an average of 845 casualties per annum. During 2006, the casualties dropped by nearly 50% to 450, and that number looks to decline even further this year. Cambodia believes that while a number of factors came together to make this decrease possible, it was largely a result of better prioritization of clearance tasks, community oriented MRE and the active involvement of the National Police in working to reduce the impacts of the scrap metal trade.

Mr President,

As you know, Cambodia continues to consider land mines and ERW as one of the most serious obstacles to sustainable human security in Cambodia. At the National Conference on Mine Action earlier this month in Phnom Penh, our Prime Minister paved the path for the Mine Action sector in working towards implementation of Article 5, namely:

- 1) The Royal Government of Cambodia will continue to demonstrate its commitment to Mine Action through budgetary support. Although one of the least developed countries in the world, the Royal Government provided US\$ 1,220,000 in 2005, and increased this to US\$ 1.75 million in 2006. The total for 2007 will be higher still. These figures are separate from the millions for mine clearance in support of infrastructure projects allocated to the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces.
- 2) The Royal Government plans to increase the use of the Engineering Corps in demining in 2008, with more focus on clearing land to benefit landmine survivors
- 3) Recognizing that the National MA Strategy and Action Plan should be updated for the next 5 years, to ensure that prioritization is further improved and clear annual targets are set working towards to government's desire to reach Zero New Casualties by 2012.
- 4) Officially approving the ERW Strategic Plan

Mr President, Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this the 10 year anniversary of the signing of the Convention, Cambodia continues to look for new partnership and techniques to accelerate our progress on combating the legacy of the long conflict in our country. Looking forward, Cambodia sees the following elements as making the most tangible impact, including:

- 1) Defining a clear and measurable plan to achieve the RGC's commitment to No New Casualties by 2012, utilizing a Programme-based Approach;
- 2) Technological Innovation: While many trials and field tests have taken place in Cambodia, some look poised to be rolled out in a way that could finally make a large scale impact to productivity;
- 3) Continuous improvement to the prioritization process: clearing the correct land first;
- 4) Sustainable funding mechanisms set up to address any funding gaps;
- 5) Improved ability to clear ERW, particularly Cluster Munitions. Cambodia has been and will continue to be an active participant in the Oslo process.

Despite much progress that has been made, the path remains long and challenging. Cambodia looks forward to working with you and your successors throughout the next years in the spirit of cooperation, friendship and partnership toward a safer world, which our children and grand children can run and play without fear.