



**ZAMBIAN STATEMENT TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON MINE  
CLEARANCE, MINE RISK EDUCATION AND MINE ACTION  
TECHNOLOGIES ON 27 – 28 MAY 2009**

Thank you for the floor, Co-Chairs.

At the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties, Zambia appraised distinguished States Parties and Friends of the Convention on the progress being made by Zambia in its quest to clear all known mined areas by its deadline of 1<sup>st</sup> August 2011. At that meeting, we reported that a nationwide landmine survey was underway to ascertain the true extent and nature of the mine contamination in the country. We were also optimistic that the country would be Article 5 compliant before the 2011 deadline.

Since the last update, the first phase of the survey involving data collection was completed on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. While the final report will only be officially released in June 2009, preliminary results confirm that Zambia has more of an ERW contamination problem rather than one of anti-personnel mines.

In the past, it has been reported that a general survey conducted in 2003, identified 41 locations suspected to be mine contaminated around the country. These locations formed the basis for the more detailed 2008/2009 survey being conducted in collaboration with Norwegian Peoples Aid. At the end of the data collection phase of the survey, 568 locations had been visited and in these locations, only 20 suspected hazardous areas and 12 suspected hazardous roads were identified. The 20 Suspect Hazardous Areas identified during the general survey were located as follows: 7 in the Southern Province, 7 in Western Province, 5 in Lusaka Province and 1 in Luapula Province. One area in Siavonga District of Southern Province was believed to contain Anti Tank Mines and Unexploded Ordnance while one area in the Shangombo District of Western Province is confirmed to contain cluster munitions and Unexploded Ordnance. Two areas in Shangombo District may contain anti-personnel mines and UXO. Explosive Ordnance Disposal operations are being conducted simultaneously whenever possible.

The general survey also initially identified 12 Suspected Hazardous Roads: 7 in the Southern Province, 4 in the Western Province and 1 in North Western Province. All the roads were believed to possibly contain Anti Tank mines and/or UXO. However, a total of 24 wards in the Western Province were inaccessible during the survey due to heavy

rains and flooding. It is anticipated that these will be accessible after the final report is ready and results will have to be appended thereafter.

Furthermore, these areas are currently being subjected to a non technical survey. Consequently, as at last week, all the areas and roads in Southern Province previously considered as hazardous were in fact not, as these were either disused due to heavy damage by weather conditions or traditional beliefs regarding movement rather than as a result of mine contamination. Modalities of officially and confidently releasing this land are being formulated. The teams have now moved to the Western Province to verify those roads and areas still listed as hazardous there. It is expected that the ongoing non-technical survey will further significantly reduce the remaining areas.

Given the foregoing, and if all necessary logistics are available promptly, Zambia is likely to declare that it has completed implementation of Article 5 by the time of the Second Review Conference.

As ERW contamination is the major concern for Zambia, Risk Education continues to be critical in reducing death and injury. The Zambia Mine Action Centre has continued to provide Risk Education to affected communities and the survey teams were able to confirm that the communities have been well sensitized as a lot of information was provided on the location of suspected explosive ordnance. In many cases items reported were only old pieces of metal. However, the number of incidents resulting from ordnance tampering has increased in the last nine months. These activities are concentrated in the Eastern Province which borders with Mozambique where Several men have been killed or seriously injured while trying to extract a substance called “red mercury” which is believed to be of high economic value even though the market for this product is still unclear. Standard Risk Education messages have failed to change behaviour and therefore alternative strategies to address this increasingly problematic tendency are currently being explored in conjunction with other stakeholders.

In conclusion, the Zambian government remains committed to meeting its obligations and is very grateful to States Parties such as Canada, Sweden, Norway, the USA and others, that have rendered support to Zambia’s mine action programme in its quest to being a mine free country. Zambia continues to urge all those in a position to assist States Parties both financially and technically in meeting Convention deadlines to do so at the earliest possible opportunity.

I thank you Co - Chairs