



STATEMENT OF H.E. PRAK SOKHONN, MINISTER ATTACHED TO THE PRIME MINISTER
OF THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
AND
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CAMBODIAN MINE ACTION AND
VICTIM ASSISTANCE AUTHORITY (CMAA)

AT THE CARTAGENA SUMMIT SECOND REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE CONVENTION
ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING AND TRANSFER OF ANTI-
PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION
03 DECEMBER 2009

Madam President Susan Eckey,

Your Royal Highnesses, Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

In His message to our 2nd Review Conference, His Majesty Norodom Sihamoni, the King of Cambodia, wishes to extend to all distinguished delegates His warmest greeting and reassures Cambodia's commitment and determination to eradicate completely the long standing problem of land mine contamination for the common goal of building a mine free world.

Madam President,

Over the past 17 years, Cambodia has made every effort, with the assistance of the international community, to reduce and destroy landmines and ERW that have negatively impacted its population and development agenda.

The clearance of mines and ERW is considered by our Government to be crucial for agriculture and rural development, which is a major priority in our Government's development strategy. In addition, a 9th Millennium Development Goal specific to mine action and victim assistance was adopted in 2004. At the global level, Cambodia has sent deminers to Sudan as part of our contribution to the UN peacekeeping operation for four consecutive years in order to help relieve the suffering and hardship that landmines pose to Sudanese people.

Approximately 850 thousands anti-personnel mines, 20 thousands anti-tank mines, and 2 millions ERW were found and destroyed. More than 515 square kilometers of contaminated land of the 4,500 square kilometers estimated by level one survey (LS1) completed in 2002 have been cleared.

It was later found that a more technical survey was needed to determine the exact level of contamination. Therefore, a survey that takes into account the broad knowledge and experiences of all operators involved in Cambodia was launched in August of this year to collect baseline data on all remaining contaminated areas. A number of strategies, plans and policies were developed under the leadership of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) to regulate and guide the effective and safe implementation of mine action activities in the country including an innovative bottom-up system allowing community participation in prioritizing land for mine clearance.

Despite all these efforts, the continued commitment of our Government, and the support from our development partners, the size and complexity of mine problems in our country did not allow us to fulfill in time our obligation under Article 5 of the Mine Ban Treaty. Therefore, we presented earlier this week our request for a ten-year extension for the clearance of all known mined areas. Once again I would like to thank all States Parties for their understanding and confidence in granting Cambodia another ten years to fulfill this task.

In conjunction with the development of the extension request, the Government in consultation with relevant stakeholders has recently developed a National Mine Action Strategy (NMAS) for mine action sector, which seeks a Cambodia free from the impact of Mines and ERW. To achieve this vision, the NMAS foresees four main goals: i) reduce the mine/ERW casualties and other negative impacts; ii) contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction, including support to survivors and their families; iii) promote international and regional disarmament including achieving the goals of the Mine Ban Treaty; and iv) ensure the sustainability of the national capacities to address remaining contamination in the future. To achieve these goals, the sector will strive to improve current mechanisms and increase the use of new methodologies such as land release. Increased coordination and partnership with development partners will also be crucial to align programmes to the goals of the strategy and thus to enhance the effective use of resources allocated to mine action.

Taking this opportunity, we would like to express our gratitude to all development partners for their support so far without which the significant reduction in casualties and the return of safe land to the people could not be achieved.

Regarding victim assistance, we have achieved substantial progress on the institutional framework to properly respond to the needs and rights of mine survivors and other persons with disabilities. Cambodia's Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the National Plan of Action on Persons with Disabilities were passed this year. The plan is an important step toward achieving the goal of more effective and coherent service provision for persons with disabilities, including landmine and other ERW survivors, their families, and affected communities.

Madam President,

Finally, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I wish to reassure you of our commitment and determination to apply and promote all principles of the Mine Ban Treaty. The success of this Second Review Conference is indeed dependent upon every one of us. Cambodia is therefore pleased to join other States Parties in adopting the Cartagena Declaration and implementing the Cartagena Action Plan. I also thank all States Parties for accepting Cambodia's offer to host the 11th Meeting of the States Parties in 2011.

The Royal Government of Cambodia looks forward to working with you throughout the next ten years in the spirit of cooperation, friendship and partnership toward a safer world, in which our children and grand children can run and play without any fear of anti-personnel mines.

Thank you for your kind attention.