

**Statement by General Supathat Narindarabhakdi,
Director-General of the Thailand Mine Action Center
at the Intersessional Meeting 2023 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
“Agenda item 4: Matters related to the mandate of the Committee on Article 5
Implementation”**

21 June 2023, Geneva, Switzerland

Mr. Chair,

On behalf of the Royal Thai Government, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the President of the 21st Meeting of States Parties to the Convention -- Ambassador Thomas Göbel of Germany, and to you, Mr. Chair, as well as the members of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation and the ISU, for the enduring commitment in driving forward the work of the Convention and paving the way towards a mine-free world.

Although mine action is a complex task, Thailand has been working vigorously to fulfil its obligation under Article 5 of the Convention. Since joining the Convention in 1999, the Royal Thai Government has put its efforts into bringing Thailand to **the final stage of our mine clearance**, with currently less than 1 per cent, **or 24.1 sq. km.** of mine contaminated areas left to be cleared.

Focusing on this final stage, we would like to share our experiences on **the progress that has been made, the challenges that lie ahead, and our way forward to achieving a mine-free Thailand.**

Thailand’s Progress since the 20MSP

The 20th Meeting of State Parties (20MSP) in December 2022 approved Thailand’s request for the extension of the deadline under Article 5 obligations until 31 December 2026. Since then, Thailand has **released an additional 5.6 sq.km. of mine contaminated areas and has successfully cleared all mines along the Thai - Lao PDR border.** Nearly 10,000 anti-personnel mines and more than 100 unexploded ordnances have been recovered during this period.

Along with the clearance efforts, since October 2022, **191 Mine Risk Education (MRE) activities** have been carried out through various means, including social

media channels and physical warning signs, to keep civilians safe from the risk of landmines.

The Remaining Challenges

The remaining mine contaminated areas are scattered in **six provinces of Thailand along the Thai - Cambodian border**. Challenges that remain at this stage include the high level of contamination in the areas, the challenging geographical landscape, and the issue of accessing to the Areas to be Demarcated (AD).

In the past few years, Thailand has worked closely with Cambodia, including on a Joint Pilot Project to clear mines along our border in 2020. Recently there have been **significant positive developments** in the efforts to strengthen our demining cooperation at the political level, including the bilateral dialogue **between the Prime Ministers of both countries during the ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh in November 2022**, in which the two leaders agreed to move forward the demining operations without having to wait for the Joint survey and demarcation.

The Way Forward

On our way forward, Thailand would like to reaffirm our readiness to work with Cambodia toward fulfilling our respective obligations under Article 5. In this regard, **Thailand appreciates Cambodia's efforts in welcoming Thailand Mine Action Center (TMAC)'s proposal on a new joint demining project**. TMAC has proposed to Cambodia possible areas for cooperation to kick start the operations under the **Thailand-Cambodia General Border Committee** framework. Once the allocation of the areas are agreeable by both sides, Thailand believes that the two countries can further strengthen their cooperation which will positively contribute to the efforts towards becoming mine-free.

In addition to our bilateral efforts with Cambodia, Thailand has been working closely with our ASEAN partners under the framework **of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC)**. Thailand proposed the drafting of a **“Non-Binding Guideline on Cross-Border Humanitarian Demining”**, which is presently carried out with assistance from the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Once adopted, the document will serve as a guideline for ASEAN Member States in their cooperation to clear landmines along the border areas.

Thailand also continues our close cooperation with various partners, including **Japan, Norway (via the NPA) and the United States**. A new project supported by **the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund, “PATOM Phase 2-VTMRAL”**, will be carried out by the **Thai Civilian Deminer Association (TDA)** to fulfil the mine clearance obligations and assist mine victims, not only in Thailand, but also along **the Mekong Region communities** affected by landmines.

Mr. Chair,

In closing, I would also like to reiterate Thailand’s commitment to becoming mine-free. We call on all parties to join hands in this endeavour and work together. By combining our efforts, we can **protect lives, restore communities, and create a safer and more prosperous future for all**.

Thank you.
