



CAMBODIA'S STATEMENT AT
THE 3rd MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS

OSLO, NORWAY, 11 – 14 SEPTEMBER, 2012

Mr. President; Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;
Distinguished Delegates;

On behalf of the Cambodian Delegation let me first, congratulate you and your colleagues for the quality of the organization of this third meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. I would like to thank the Government of Norway for its warmest hospitality and all arrangements.

Cambodia is known to be contaminated by cluster munitions remnants as a result of the US war in Indochina in the 1970s and the recent conflict with a neighboring country. Despite the fact that Cambodia has not yet signed the Convention, Cambodia has already been working and addressing many important aspects of the Convention as we now speak. Let me report to you about progress made by Cambodia in removing this threat, as well as the greater one posed by landmines and other explosive remnants of war. Cambodia during the past years has made tremendous progress on many fronts such as mine/ERW/CM survey, marking and clearance, victim assistance, research and development of new technologies, Risk Education, Gender Mainstreaming in Mine Action as well as in the provision of technical cooperation and assistance. Since 1992 up to July 2012, a total of 85,201 ha of mined/ERW affected land have been cleared nation-wide for housing, farming and other infrastructures and 945,954 anti-personnel mines, 22,178 anti-tank mines and 2,233,108 explosive remnants of war have been found and destroyed. The National Mine Action Strategy 2010-2019 (NMAS) approved in late 2010 is an inclusive strategy that also encompasses cluster munitions. Our efforts in implementing the NMAS also cover the cluster munitions which are part of the explosive remnants of war.

Since August 2009 as part of efforts to comply with the APMBC, Cambodia started a new approach to survey (so called Baseline Survey) to identify and record all remaining mine/ERW/CM suspected areas. As a result by August 2012, 14,327 polygons have been captured totaling 1,658,312,609 M² of contaminated land. We are now at the last phase of baseline survey in the eastern areas and hope to conclude these activities by end of this year.

The BLS will capture all remaining contaminated areas and classify land according to the type of threat. A specific land classification exists for areas contaminated by cluster munitions. To ensure better results and optimize our efforts, CMAA planned to visit Lao PDR next year to learn and share experiences on survey methodology with the Lao Authority, especially for the survey of ERW/CM contaminated areas.

In Cambodia, significant reduction in the number of casualties has been achieved from 4,320 victims in 1996 to 211 casualties last year. This substantial achievement is the result of collective efforts, the continued clearance and risk education. Moreover, the enforcement of the law by way of putting relevant measures to scrap metal dealers by all police network is also contributing to this achievement.

Despite the unwavering efforts of the Royal Government of Cambodia and its long term partners, ERW continue to kill and injure civilians, deny access to productive land and create fear in the mind of Cambodian people living in contaminated areas. We continue to work everyday to bring safety and prosperity to those who have been, or might one day be victims of these inhumane weapons.

As one of the pioneers of the movement to ban cluster munitions, Cambodia remains fully committed to the humanitarian and legal principles of the CCM. Cambodia is still assessing the impact of signing the Convention on Cluster Munitions on its defense capability and the ability to comply with all obligations. In the meantime, we stand by the goals of the Convention. Cambodia's refrain from the use of cluster munitions during her recent armed conflicts with her neighboring country is the testimony of her conviction. We are pleased to report that effort to come up with a decision has been made at the highest level of our Government. To that extent, Cambodia is making every effort to identify areas contaminated by CM, and clear them according to community based priority-setting mechanisms, educate the mine/ERW/CM affected communities about the risks and assist the victims. We sincerely believe that the ultimate signing is merely a matter of time. Cambodia is also looking at expanding its works and looks forward to cooperate closely with neighboring countries to meet relevant obligations stipulated in the Convention. Let me conclude by thanking all Development Partners who have contributed to Cambodia to clear mine/ERW over the years and for their continuing support to help reduce the painful and persistent legacies of the conflicts that inhibited Cambodia.

Thank you!