



Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Intersessional Meeting of Convention on Cluster Munitions

15 – 18 April 2013

Speech

Update on the Extent of Landmine and Cluster Munitions Contamination in Afghanistan

Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the last meeting in Beirut in 2011, the Government of Afghanistan has made some progress in order to meet its obligation against the convention on cluster munitions.

As a result of ongoing conflicts since 1979, Afghanistan has become one of the heavily landmine and other explosive remnants of war affected countries in the world. There are more than 4,749 hazardous areas that need to be cleared. The estimated size of the remaining contamination is about 523 sq km, located in 1,701 communities in about 33 out of 34 provinces of the country. In addition to extensively using landmines and leaving behind ERW, warring factions in Afghanistan left behind considerable cluster munitions hazards mainly in the residential areas or in the areas that are vital for livelihoods.

According to the national database, 180 areas have been reported as contaminated with Cluster Munitions. To date, 158 cluster munitions contaminated sites have been cleared by the Implementing Partners of the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan and a total of 284,413 unexploded cluster munitions were found and destroyed. As per available records there are 20 cluster munitions contaminated sites covering an estimated area of 7.5 sq km and directly impacting 7 communities are yet to be addressed. This contamination has blocked access to about 760 hectares of agriculture and grazing land and threatens the lives of about 1,930 people.

Over 21 million people have received Mine Risk Education

We look forward to an Afghanistan free of mines and ERW including Cluster Munitions, where people can walk safely across their fields and land is returned to productive use, contributing to stability, economic development and a better future.

Thank you

The third Intersessional Meeting to the Convention on Cluster Munitions will take place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 15 to 18 April 2013.