

South Sudan Delegation to the 12th CCM MSP

Statement

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor to address you today at this significant gathering, the 12th Meeting of States Parties. This meeting holds special significance for the Republic of South Sudan as we mark almost exactly one year since our accession to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, proudly becoming its 112th member state.

While we take pride in this achievement, we must also acknowledge the substantial work that lies ahead. Although the number of casualties from anti-personnel mines has decreased significantly, we face the sobering reality that casualties from cluster munitions now outnumber those from landmines by more than 3:1.

The destructive impact of cluster bombs is deeply troubling. The indiscriminate threat of unexploded bomblets poses a persistent threat to civilians, particularly in rural areas. In South Sudan, cluster munitions and other Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) have killed or injured nearly 250 people over the last five years - over 75% of whom were children.

Beyond the immediate loss of life and injury, these hazards cast a long shadow over our developmental aspirations. They obstruct the delivery of humanitarian aid, impede access to vital infrastructure, and hinder sustainable socio-economic progress. However, amidst these challenges, we find inspiration and motivation in the significant achievements we have made.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since South Sudan's accession to the CCM, our Mine Action sector has successfully cleared close to 1,400 cluster munitions. I ask you to pause and reflect on this number. These 1,400 items are not merely abstract statistics - they represent 1,400 potential threats that no longer endanger our population. 1,400 items that could have denied access to a vital water point, to farmland, a health facility or to a school. 1,400 items that could have taken the life of a child.

LIVES OF PEOPLE OR ANIMALS

These achievements are a testament to the collective efforts of national and international NGOs, the United Nations, our international donors, and most importantly, the brave women and men who risk their lives daily to remove these hidden dangers lurking under our feet. Since independence, South Sudan has made remarkable progress, reducing contaminated land from over 400 km² to 21 km² of known contamination today.

However, while there is significant progress, this progress is not linear. Even as we clear millions of square meters each year, we continue to discover previously unknown contaminated areas. Over the last five years, for every 3 m² we cleared, we found, on average, 2 m² of previously unknown contamination.

These ongoing discoveries make our Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) completion deadline of 2026 increasingly challenging. Other obstacles include seasonal flooding, poor infrastructure, prevailing insecurity, and, and last but not least, steadily decreasing funding levels.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we look back on our progress, it becomes clear that a South Sudan free from explosive hazards, including cluster munitions and other ERW, is an attainable goal. The finish line is within our sight!

At this pivotal moment, let us renew our collective dedication to achieving a South Sudan free of explosive ordnance. Despite the obstacles we face, this goal is still within our grasp. With shared commitment to disarmament, humanitarian safety, and unwavering determination to ensure a brighter future for our people, we can and will achieve it. Thank you.