



INTERNATIONAL MINE ACTION DAY

Background:

The African Union Commission continues to support Member States to meet their obligations under the Mine Ban Treaty. It is to be recalled that the 62nd Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers, held in June 1995 in Addis Ababa, adopted Resolution *CM/Res 1593* under the theme “*UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and Problems Posed by the Proliferation of Anti-Personnel Mines in Africa*”; which was the first decision among several others that were subsequently adopted by AU Policy Organs¹ which, *inter alia*, called for the total ban of anti-personnel landmines and the universality of the relevant legally binding instruments and endorsed measures for addressing the impact of landmines. These developments led to the adoption of the Common African Positions on landmines.

It is also recalled that African states were very strong advocates in the global process leading to the adoption of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Presently, 94% of African Union Member States are signatories to relevant international treaties on Anti-Personnel Mine Action Convention, while 93% have signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 80% have signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions and 52% have signed the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Presently, eleven (11) AU Member States are yet to fulfill their mine clearance obligations, pursuant to Article 5 of the convention. The AU Commission will continue to work with the affected Member States to mobilize technical and financial support to enable them meet their mine clearance obligations.

International Mine Action Day:

On 8 December 2005, The United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/60/97 in which it declared the 4th April of each year to be observed as the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action. The international Mine Awareness Day is an opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of the international community to a world free from the threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war, assess progress and gaps towards this objective, and pay tribute to deminers and victims of landmines.

1

1 These include decision *CM/Dec.363 (LXVI)* of the 66th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers, held in May 1997 in Harare; *AHG/Dec.135 (LXX)* of the 35th Ordinary Session of the OAU Assembly, held in July 1999 in Algiers; and decision *EX.CL/Dec.164 (V)* of the 5th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the AU, held in March 2004., the AU Peace and Security Council, at its 584th meeting held on 29 March 2016, adopted a communiqué and most recently, the AU Peace and Security Council, at its 837th meeting held on 4 April 2019, calling upon Member States to spare no effort in meeting their clearance obligations pursuant to the APMBC, CCM, and the CCW.

This is an instrumental occasion to draw attention to not only the progress made in eliminating the threat of mines and explosive remnants of war and banishing them as relics of the past, but also highlight the existing challenges faced by member states that have not managed to fulfill their obligations. Particularly considering the fast-approaching Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) 2025 deadline, the AU PSC is organizing an open session, Mine Action day celebration with the following objectives:

Objectives:

The global theme for the mine action is Perseverance-Partnership-Progress. Strengthen existing **partnerships** and built new ones, **perseverance** – especially in the face of COVID-19 challenges; and continue to make **progress** towards a world free from the threat of landmines and Explosive Remnants of War.

The specific objectives include:

1. To promote the APMBC convention which forms a central component of the mine action normative framework.
2. To emphasizes the increased necessity and urgency of strengthening regional approach on action against landmines.
3. Encourage state parties to fulfill their obligation and realize the goal set by Maputo declaration and the recently adopted Oslo Action plan on 29 November 2019.
4. Take stock and discuss on status of continental mine action activities, constraints posed and arising opportunities to attain convention obligation;

Anticipated Output:

The meeting will be an opportunity to:

- create continental awareness on the continued threat of landmines and other explosive remnants of war, especially to the safety of innocent citizens.
- highlight the need for enhanced ownership of national mine action programs, and the need to strengthen inter-African cooperation, partnerships and coalition.
- enable exchange of views on best practices that are key to the successful implementation of the Convention's obligations including national ownership and national mine action strategy.
- create opportunity for networking and to strengthen national Mine Action effort, while enhancing the opportunities for regional partnership and integration.

Contact:

For further information, please contact below:

Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department – DDR/SSR Division

Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

Attention: Mr. Christopher Kayoshe; email: Kayoshec@africa-union.org; mobile: 092 313 6843