

MAPUTO REVIEW CONFERENCE, JUNE 2014

INTERVENTION / STATEMENT FROM THE HALO TRUST (CHIEF EXECUTIVE GUY WILLOUGHBY), given at 10.15hrs, 26 June 2014

CLEAR IN 10 YEARS FROM NOW, OR TREAD ON MINES FOR ANOTHER 28 YEARS

- A CHOICE.

Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We see that there is an intention and aspiration to complete all clearance of AP mines by 2025 (eleven years from now), but we also hear that some of the countries that signed the Mine Ban Treaty are now unhappy about aspiring to this 2025 target. We find this strange. Why sign to a 10 Year Treaty commitment in 1997, but then be prepared to over-run after 28 years? Hopefully we are mistaken – may be it's just an "i" or a "t" that needs dotting and crossing, or gone astray? Surely "aspiration" is not a bad thing.

Why is HALO commenting on this? In 1988, when the Russians were committed to leaving Afghanistan, I introduced to the humanitarian aid sector a new concept called "humanitarian demining", and established an NGO called The HALO Trust to clear landmines. That was over 26 years ago. We now have nearly 8,000 deminers working in 17 of the most mined countries and territories, and last week we reached 1.5 million landmines safely destroyed, that's 1.5 million mines that will never be trodden on - and the number of HALO deminers should be 9,436 by December this year as we expand in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Cambodia. Our funding is from virtually all the major mine action donors here today. Is this good news? Yes, because we are making great progress at making many mine-impacted countries mine free – such as Mozambique. If we can continue our trajectory of growth, with another 2,000

deminers during 2015 spread across Angola, Zimbabwe and Colombia then that is also very good news. This number of HALO deminers, if sustained at 11,500 over the next 10 years *WILL* result in Mine Ban Treaty compliance for the five most mined countries in the world – Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Colombia and Zimbabwe – and at the same time will see the clearance of all landmines in the West Bank, Kosovo, Armenia, Georgia, Sri Lanka, Somalia and so on – and then see HALO redeploying to Bosnia or other countries struggling with their clearance. HALO teams can do this, we really can. To borrow from Donald Rumsfeld, we are now generally dealing with Known Knowns, not Unknown Unknowns – we can see on our planning matrix how many clearance teams are needed for each country for how many years and at what cost.

But but, it is also very apparent to us, through our planning matrix, that if the mine action community (all of which are here today) allow funding levels of mineclearance to drop, rather than nudge up by 15-20%, then Angola will take 28 more years to clear instead of 10, Cambodia 18 more years, Afghanistan 15 and Zimbabwe 48 more years – all way beyond 2025. It is a simple case of “Doing the Math on clearance rates” – less money means less teams means less hectares of mine impacting ground cleared per annum that means more years to achieve clearance of the known finite problem – though actually the final cost of reduced clearance over a longer period is not any cheaper than expanded clearance over a shorter period – the same cumulative salaries and fuel. It’s not cheaper, but during the extended clearance years there will be thousands more human and livestock casualties, thousands of hectares left uncultivated. These are the “added costs” of slower clearance rates.

Surely, no one in this room wants that? Surely the Presidents, Prime Ministers and the tax paying public don’t want to see so many more years of unnecessary

death and disability. So why not sign up to the 2025 aspiration? There seems no reason not to. Why not aspire to making landmines history?

And I feel obliged, on behalf of many mine victims that I have met in recent months, to also mention a real need for the big Victim Assistance agencies and Ministries of Health to re-focus back to your great work of 15 years ago. There is something very tragic in meeting so many recent amputees who have no prosthetics, or are carving their own out of local wood, and making their own crutches. For them, please go up-country again and see what is happening, and not happening.

Thank you very much,

Guy Willoughby, Director, The HALO Trust,

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www.halotrust.org

mail@halotrust.org