

## **Final APLs Stockpile Destruction in Thailand**

Distinguished delegates, it is a great pleasure for me to address you today and to inform you that Thailand has completed the destruction of its stockpiled APL on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2003, six days ahead of the deadline. As most of you aware, States Parties to the Ottawa Convention are required to destroy all APLs in its stockpiles within four years. Now, Thailand has become one of the countries in the Asian Region who has completed its stockpile destruction.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2003, Deputy Supreme Commander presided over the final APLs Stockpile Destruction at Kao Pu Lone, Artillery Firing Range, Lopburi province. High ranking representatives included the Director of Army Ordnance Department, the Canadian Ambassador to Thailand, Military Attaches to Bangkok, various Thai authorities, NGOs, International Press Members, local communities and Mine Victims witnessed the event. Total number of 342,695 APLs were destroyed during the entire destruction programmes. The last 2,500 APLs were destroyed on that day, a total of 4,970 APLs are retained for training, research and development.

Thailand used the Open (OD) Detonation destruction technique by using high explosive TNT or C4 which is available and inexpensive. The method used for the destruction is to dig a hole, with about five holes located nearby, the size of each hole is 1x1 meter width, 1.5 meter depth, covered with soil at the minimum of 30 cm, each hole has the capacity to destroy about 500 APLs. The destruction has been conducting at a safety distance about 5 kilometers away from community area. We also placed the red flags by each hole as a warning sign to ensure the people were aware. The operation is conducted properly within safe and security purpose. The process is checked by the Pollution Control Department to prevent any potential effects on the environment. The cost for the entire destruction programmes provided by the Thai Government amounted to approximately 3 million bath or about 800,000 USD.

Thailand is proud of its effort to meet the stockpile destruction obligation and has always given high priority to this pillar of mine action, since we realize that every stockpiled mine destroyed is a life potentially save.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage the States Parties who may face difficulties in the area of stockpile destruction to take action immediately since the deadline for completion is rapidly approaching for many States Parties. Should our simple methodology on stockpile destruction be of benefit to others, please contact me. Thailand stands ready to share its experience in order to assist those States Parties.

Thank you very much

Maj. Gen. Gitti Suksomstarn

Director General of TMAC

15 May 2003