

Development of ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center



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ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC)



Overview

Upon full operationalization, ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) has served as a **center of excellence** to assist interested ASEAN Member States (AMS) in research, knowledge sharing and raising awareness of the effects of explosive remnants of war (ERW) and explore ways to solve the issue. Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, proposed the possibility of establishing the ARMAC to be based in Phnom Penh on 18th November 2012 at the 21st ASEAN Summit during Cambodia's Chairmanship of ASEAN. Samdech Techo HUN SEN's initiative stems from acknowledging that the sharing of best practices and experiences through regional cooperation is vital to the success of demining activity and common effort to address ERW. His vision is cognizant to the fact that not only Cambodia, but also some ASEAN Member States namely Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam, have also suffered from land mines, unexploded ordnance (UXO) and ERW.

ASEAN Leaders issued the ASEAN Leaders' Statement on the Establishment of an ARMAC at the 21st ASEAN Summit, which then led to the adoption of its Terms of Reference (TOR) at the 23rd ASEAN Summit in October 2013 in Brunei Darussalam.

The ARMAC's headquarters in Phnom Penh was inaugurated on 25 May 2016 presided over by H.E. Prak Sokhonn, Senior Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Kingdom of Cambodia. On 20 April 2017, Interim Executive Director has the office to begin the operation of this center. Later this year, a new Executive Director of ARMAC officially assumed the position for a non-renewable term of three years, commencing from 20 October 2017.

Functions

ARMAC facilitates cooperation between interested AMS and relevant institutions, including the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), to:

- Enhance awareness programmes on the dangers of ERW among affected communities;
- Facilitate appropriate medical and rehabilitation assistance for victims of ERW, upon request from the affected ASEAN Member States; and
- Assist interested ASEAN Member States in research and knowledge sharing on the effects of ERW and efforts to address them, including through writing proposals for technical assistance projects and funding, at their specific and individual request.

H.E. Senior Minister, Prak Sokhonn presided over the Inaugural Ceremony of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) Headquarters

Cambodia, which is estimated to have 4 to 6 million land mines and littered with other kinds of unexploded ordinance (UXO), left over from half a million tons of bombs dropped on Cambodia during the war in the late



H.E. Prak Sokhonn , Senior Minister,
Minister of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
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60s and early 70s, have impacted socio-economic development, especially on the agricultural sector that is one of the main pillars for Cambodia's economy. Not only Cambodia that experienced this, but also some AMS namely Lao PDR, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, have been suffered from land mines, UXO and ERW as well. Due to this fact, it is vital to call for sharing best practices and experiences through regional cooperation.

Upon its full operationalization, ARMAC contributes to regional cooperation on addressing UXO through: information sharing, capacity building, and promoting awareness of the dangers of unexploded ordnance and explosive remnant of war among ASEAN Member States, and thus is supporting the goal of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint 2025 in building a resilient community where the people can live in peace, stability, security and prosperity.



ASEAN to operationalize the Regional Mine Action Center

In order to facilitate the full operationalization of the Center, the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia set up an Inter-ministries' Working Group on the establishment of ARMAC (JWG on ARMAC) comprising the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of Economic and Finance, Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC), and The Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) on 16 June 2016. The purpose of establishing the JWG on ARMAC is to ensure the full and effective operationalization of the ARMAC through coordination with relevant stakeholders, development of rules and procedures, and support for the work and role of the SC of ARMAC.



The Inaugural Meeting of the Steering Committee of the ARMAC was held on 21 September 2016 at the ARMAC's Headquarters in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The Meeting discussed the substantive matters for the full operationalization of ARMAC, including the selection of the Executive Director, the Annual Operational Budget and the two-year work plan (2017-2018) of the Center.

It was the first Meeting to kick start the Center into full function since the adoption of its Terms of Reference by the ASEAN Leaders in 2013. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Prasith Sayasith, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Lao PDR to Cambodia, and attended by the Representatives to the Steering Committee of ARMAC of AMS and the ASEAN Secretariat.

ASEAN Member States' contribution for full operation of ARMAC:

The Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia, as the host country, has donated a building for the Headquarters of the ARMAC, which was officially launched on 25 May 2016. This building has been renovated under the generous assistance of the Government of the People's Republic of China.

Cambodia has officially announced full funding support for Annual Operational Budget of the ARMAC for 2017-2018. The Government of Philippines has also made voluntary contribution of USD 32,100 to support the ARMAC's daily operation. Thanks for the Philippines' kind contribution so that ARMAC could enhance its day-to-day functions. These contributions represent AMS commitment for full and effective operationalization of ARMAC.

ASEAN to operationalize the Regional Mine Action Center



H.E. Prum Sophakmonkol, Under-Secretary of State of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia and Cambodia's Representative to the Steering Committee of ARMAC.

The Second Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Center was held on 21st November 2016 at the ARMAC's Headquarters. The Meeting was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Prasith Sayasith, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Lao PDR to Cambodia, and attended by Representatives of AMS and ASEAN Secretariat.

Pending the successful selection of the Executive Director, the Meeting discussed the operationalization of ARMAC and endorsed Cambodia's proposal to have Interim Executive Director to cope with day-to-day operation of ARMAC and to support the works of the Steering Committee. The Meeting adopted the Guidelines for the Recruitment of the Executive Director. The Meeting also discussed and revised the annual operational budget, and the two-year work plan (2017-2018) of the Center.



ASEAN to operationalize the Regional Mine Action Center

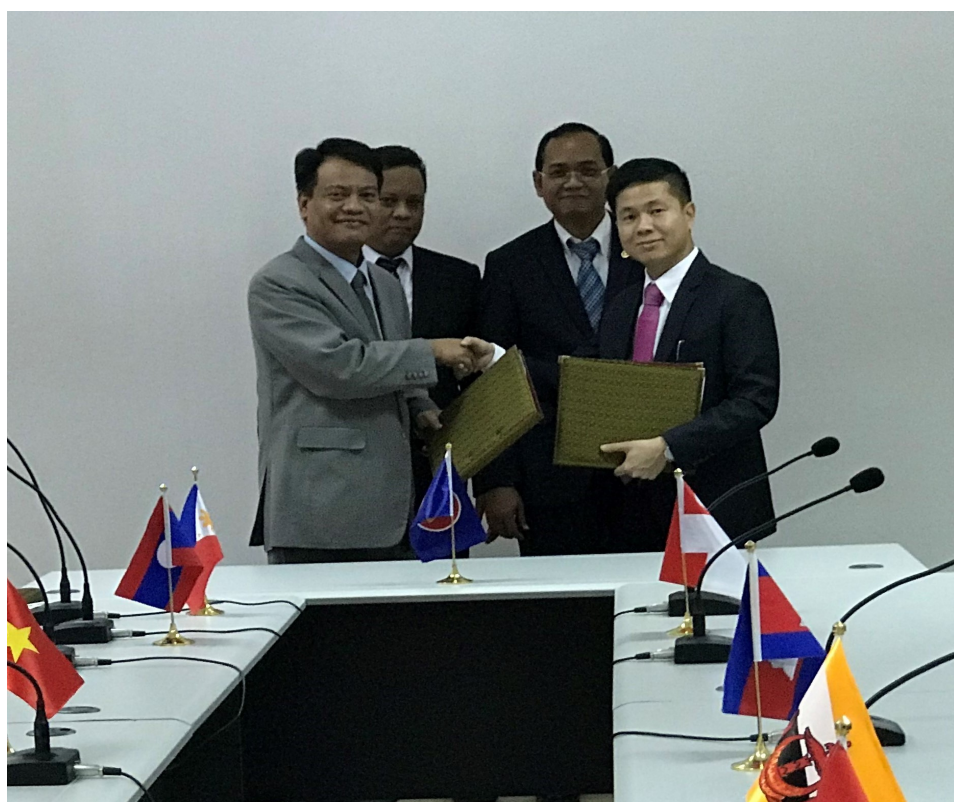
The Third Meeting of the Steering Committee of the ARMAC was held on 03 July 2017 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Phnom Penh. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Christopher B. Montero, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Philippines to Cambodia and Chair of the Steering Committee of ARMAC for 2017. All members of the Steering Committee, representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat, and Interim Executive Director of ARMAC attended the Meeting.

The discussion of the Meeting focused on the operationalization of the Center, including revised Annual Operational Budget 2017, its Work Plan (2017-2018) and the selection of Executive Director.

On 20 October 2017, a new Executive Director of ARMAC officially assumed the position. Mr. Ly Panharith signed his employment contract with Mr. Christopher B. Montero, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Philippines and Chair of the ARMAC Steering Committee, at the ARMAC Headquarters in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.



H.E. Christopher B. Montero, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Philippines to Cambodia and Chair of the Steering Committee



As part of his functions and duties, the new Executive Director will undertake activities to ensure full operationalization of ARMAC which shall serve as a center of excellence for efforts to address explosive remnants of war among interested AMS. Mr. Ly Panharith will serve as Executive Director of the ARMAC Permanent Secretariat for a non-renewable term of three years until 20 October 2020.

The Briefing on the Progress and Development of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia hosted a Briefing on the Progress and Development of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) on 27 March 2017 at the Ministry.

The focus of the Briefing was on ARMAC's recent developments, including: its objective and direction, activities to be undertaken, and resource mobilisation.

The Briefing was conducted by H.E. Prum Sophakmonkol, Under-Secretary of State of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia, and H.E. Christopher Montero. 45 participants from the embassies of AMS, dialogue partners, sectoral dialogue partners, development partners, and other regional and international organizations on mine actions attended the Briefing.

H.E. Christopher Montero highlighted priorities of the Center: how to fully operationalize the ARMAC Secretariat while working to ensure the adoption of the ARMAC Work Plan 2017-2018, and how to sustain the ARMAC's operations by exploring means of financial support and technical assistance from AMS, dialogue partners, development partners, and mine related regional and international organizations, in order to implement the Center's activities and programmes.

The inauguration of ARMAC was warmly welcomed by the United Nations Development Program, who expressed their interests in supporting and assisting the operation of the Center, in order to address, share and raise awareness of the effects of explosive remnants of war (ERW).



Workshop on Raising Awareness of the Explosive Remnant of War (ERW) and Risk Reduction Education

On 09-10 June 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia organized a "Workshop on Raising Awareness of the Explosive Remnant of War (ERW) and Risk Reduction Education" in Siem Reap. The workshop was presided over by H.E. Prum Sophakmonkol, Under-Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and was attended by the representatives from the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), and Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC).



The workshop underscored the importance of strengthening cooperation with national institutions, regional and international organizations in mine action education, raising awareness on the ERW and risk reduction. There is also a need to maintain continued cooperation with relevant national ministries and institutions such as CMAC, CMAA and the Ministry of Economy and Finance in order to support and contribute to the full operationalization of ARMAC. To this end, national and regional seminars and joint working group meeting should be convened regularly to update on recent developments in the field of mine actions, and to share experiences and best practices to the ARMAC and for the benefit of Cambodia as well as other ASEAN Member States.

The workshop provided some recommendations as follows: 1- strengthen law enforcement on the management of ERW; 2- encourage more workshops/seminars at both national and regional levels and engage regional and international organizations and partners such as UNMAS, GICHD, JMAS, JICA, NPA, MAG, ICRC., to share knowledge, experience and best practices on mine related matters; 3- formulate and develop Improvised Explosive Device (IED) documents to share with ARMAC, other relevant Cambodian institutions, and interested countries; 4- promote a safe village-commune policy to reduce the risk of ERW and unexploded ordnance (UXO); and 5- encourage more projects and activities to promote cooperation and seek for support and assistance from dialogue and development partners, and to contribute to the humanitarian demining.

Workshop for Operation of ARMAC: “Addressing on Humanitarian Assistance and ERW: Integrated Approach” And The 11th Meeting of the JWG on ARMAC

On 26 October 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia organized a Workshop for Operation of ARMAC: “Addressing on Humanitarian Assistance and ERW: Integrated Approach” in Siem Reap. The Workshop was presided over by H.E. Prum Sophakmonkol, Under-Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and was attended by the representatives from the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, ARMAC, CMAA, and CMAC.



The outcome of workshop focused highly on conducting Mine / ERW survey to provide an understanding of the needs and challenges in the AMS and to explore the resources available both within and outside ASEAN. Survey can be organized as desk assessment, online survey, workshop and meeting. It aimed to promote the exchanges between each of the operators and promote good cooperation between national and international organizations and relevant mine action teams to support AR-

MAC through training of technical expertise in mine clearance and unexploded ordnance in order to raise the reputation and capacity of ARMAC in the international arena. The Workshop also emphasized continue cooperation among AMS and relevant mine action related NGOs in order to encourage more initiative with dialogue partners and stakeholders in the field of mine action through financial and technical support for humanitarian assistance. The Workshop underscored the importance of ARMAC's roles in deepening cooperation with five other ASEAN Member States affected by ERW in order to share Cambodia's experiences and increase the following knowledge base: Peacekeeping Operation, Land release, Mine Victim Assistance, Database management, Cambodia Mine Victim Information System (CMVIS), Baseline survey, and Coordination mechanism.

Back-to-back with the above workshop, the 11th Meeting of the JWG on ARMAC was also convened on 27th October 2017. The Meeting discussed on full and effective operationalization of ARMAC and the draft Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia and the ARMAC on Hosting and Granting privileges and Immunities to ARMAC. The meeting encourages ARMAC Executive Director to update ARMAC recent activities and explore the possibilities of cooperation between ARMAC, and Cambodian relevant institutions, and international organizations.

Seminar on Enhancing Regional Coordination efforts in Addressing Explosive Remnant of War (ERW)

On 15 December 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia organized a Seminar on Enhancing Regional Coordination Efforts in Addressing Explosive Remnant of War (ERW) in Siem Reap. The Seminar was presided over by H.E. Prum Sophakmonkol, Under-Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and were attended by the representatives from the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, The National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces, Mine and Explosive Remnants of War Clearance (NPMEC), ARMAC, CMAA, CMAC, and Norwegian People's Aid.

The discussion of this Seminar focused on preventive measures awareness on Mine Risk Education (MRE) and Unexploded Explosive Ordnance (UXO) and strengthening trainer's capacity and provide more equipment for training on mine management, in particular by focusing on Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and Explosive Remnant of War (ERW). Participants shared views that it is critical to have sufficient financial resource which is under the custody of the ARMAC in order to ensure sustainability to the ARMAC and its operation. They suggested that ARMAC should: a) develop action plan; b) initiate activities and projects such as organizing workshop/seminar/training or field trip study for interested AMS; and c) develop project proposal to support ARMAC's operation and to provide appropriate assistance to the ARMAC in resolving challenges on ERW for interested AMS.



The Seminar also recommended ARMAC to share Cambodia's experiences and best practices with other AMS in some important areas namely 1) peacekeeping operation; 2) land release; 3) mine victim assistance; 4) data-base management and mine victim information system; 5) baseline survey; and 6) coordination mechanism.

During this Seminar, NPMEC informed that they would organize an ASEAN training program for trainers in mine clearance in early 2018 and sought assistance of ARMAC for the preparation.

Back-to-back with the Seminar, the 12th Meeting of JWG on ARMAC was convened on 16 December 2017 to review its work and discuss the possibility of financial contribution for ARMAC after 2018. The Meeting agreed to encourage ARMAC to seek technical and financial support from other AMS, ASEAN Dialogue Partners, especially from Japan/JAIF, and other donors for ARMAC activities and projects, including exploring the possibility to establish appropriate ARMAC fund. At the same time, ARMAC should enhance its coordination with interested Cambodian mine action-related institutions such as CMAA, NPMEC and CMAC to promote awareness programmes, mobilize project proposals, and implement activities of ARMAC.

To know why ARMAC is different from CMAC and CMAA, let's get to know these two organizations!



Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC) is a Cambodia's leading demining organization, working in the key areas of Survey and Land Release, Mine and UXO Clearance, Mine and UXO Risk Education and Training, Research and Development. CMAC currently has 1,715 staff across Cambodia, including a national office in Phnom Penh, six provincial demining units and a Training Centre in Kampong Chhnang, working towards the mission of "Saving lives and Supporting Development for Cambodia".

CMAC was established during the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1992, in order to assist the safe return of thousands of refugees to their homelands across the country. Recognizing that the large number of landmines and UXO across Cambodia was a significant threat to post conflict reconstruction and continuing development, CMAC became an autonomous national organization in 2000 and developed a series of programs including landmine awareness, landmine field information, landmine and UXO clearance and training in landmine clearance to achieve the safe transition to peace and security for the people of Cambodia.



The Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), established under Royal Decree No. 177 on 06 September 2000, is mandated to regulate, monitor and coordinate the mine action sector in Cambodia. CMAA is under the direct leadership of the Prime Minister and the CMAA Vice President while the CMAA Secretary General manages operations related to its mandate.

The CMAA is also responsible for formulating strategic and work performance plans necessary to achieve the priorities stipulated in the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP). The CMAA has led the sector in formulating key policy and strategic frameworks, such as the National Mine Action Strategy 2010-2019 and the Partnership Principles, as well as guidance and instructions for managing and regulating the sector, such as the Cambodian Mine Action Standards (CMAS), and the planning and prioritization guidelines.

CMAA is also tasked to lead and coordinate mine action activities implemented by mine clearance operators. In addition, CMAA facilitates the integration of development projects into mine action activities by enhancing partnerships between government ministries and institutions, development partners, local authorities, community development organizations and other development entities. To improve aid coordination and partnership between development partners and the Government, CMAA coordinates the Technical Working Group on Mine Action (TWG-MA) which is under the leadership of the CMAA Vice President.

For more information: Please visit <http://cmac.gov.kh> & <http://www.cmaa.gov.kh/>



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