Mr. Chairman

On behalf of the Government of Mozambique, I would like to thank you for the opportunity given to me to present some information on the clearance of Explosive Remnants of War in Mozambique. I will also provide some information on the role of capacity development, to assist us in building a national capacity to respond to the residual threat posed by ERW.

Allow me first to begin by giving some background information on ERW contamination in Mozambique. Mozambique remains one of the world’s Least Developed Countries and continues to recover from the nearly 30 years of warfare that ended in 1993. ERW in Mozambique include Unexploded Ordnance, landmines and abandoned ammunition.

Landmines and explosive ordnance were widely used by all parties in the independence struggle and wars of destabilization. Landmines were primarily used to defend large infrastructure sites (e.g. Railroads, powerlines, dams, etc) and to target troop movements during the war. Almost no maps were maintained of where landmines were planted resulting in large, undefined suspected areas with small numbers of scattered mines. Much of the independence struggle and wars of destabilization were fought using insurgency and guerrilla warfare tactics, meaning that fighting was not restricted to a particular frontline. As a result, explosive ordnance and small arms were used in wide and undefined areas in every province of Mozambique.

In the early 1990’s, Mozambique was considered as one of the most heavily affected countries by landmines in the world. During the campaign to ban anti-personnel landmines, Mozambique was presented as an example of how landmines cause unacceptable harm to civilians, block development and prevent post-war recovery. Mozambique was among the first countries to sign the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban
Convention in December 1997. Mozambique ratified the Convention in August 1998 and the Convention entered into force in March 1999. Under Article 5 of the Ottawa Convention, Mozambique has made tremendous progress in identifying all known mined areas and is aiming to complete demining of all known mined areas in 2014.

However, as we move closer to completing demining in 2014, we are well aware that, like any state that has suffered through modern warfare, Mozambique will face a residual threat from other Explosive Remnants of War long into the future. This is because of several reasons:

- First the widespread use of explosive weapons and that fact that combatants did not keep records or maps.

- Second, when Mozambique completes demining in accordance with article 5 of the landmine treaty, the Government is declaring that all known minefields have been cleared up to the standard depth of 13 centimeters as required by our National Mine Action Standards. This does not rule out the possibility that explosive ordnance may be buried at deeper depths.

- Finally, due to their widespread use, the range of the weapons used and the depths at which UXO can be buried, it is very difficult to accurately conduct battle area clearance in order to guarantee that an area will be free of UXO.

Today, as countries in Western Europe continue to find explosive remnants from World War I and World War II, we are sure that the Government of Mozambique will continue to find ERW from our wars for decades to come.

Currently, civilians and police who find UXO or abandoned ammunition can call on the National Demining Institute and the Humanitarian Demining Operators present in Mozambique to assist in the safe destruction and disposal of dangerous items. But after completing demining, Mozambique will need a sustainable national capacity to respond to the residual threat from UXO. In December 2012, the Council of Ministers of Mozambique decided that after the completion of demining in Mozambique, the responsible authority to respond to the threats from ERW will be the Ministry of Interior and the Police of the Republic of Mozambique. The IND is therefore developing a transition plan and aims to train and equip the specialized units in the police force to enable them to respond appropriately when civilians discover items of UXO.

In this regard, Mozambique is very grateful for the assistance of the United States of America and the US AFRICOM for their partnership and support in training qualified cadres of Mozambicans in Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD). The national capacity that AFRICOM is assisting us to build will enable us to train a network of police EOD technicians in every province of Mozambique. In the future, these police
bomb squads will be able to safely dispose of UXO that will inevitably continue to threaten civilians in Mozambique long after the last international deminer has left the country.

We are still in the early days of building our national capacity to address the residual threat of UXO and we are still looking for the support from our international partners to assist us. In particular we will continue to need assistance in preparing our transition plan, in training and equipping our teams. Also, it would be very useful to share experience with our own neighbors, in a form of south-south cooperation, to see how they address similar threats. When we look for models for our future national EOD capacity, the context of EOD and ERW in other Southern African countries will of course be more similar to our own experience than that of a Western European country with more resources.

In closing, allow me again to thank you for taking the initiative to organize this special session.

Obrigado!