

## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO BAN LANDMINES

### ARTICLE 5 – CLEARANCE

25 June 2015

We thank the Committee members for their engagement with states that are implementing Article 5, and for the useful dialogue with civil society.

Thanks to all delegations who shared updates. There is a wealth of expertise in this room and it's great to hear from you in the informal context of this gathering. For those who had to cut back their statements, be assured that we will read through your submitted statements with attention. In particular our colleagues from Landmine Monitor certainly value the data you have been sharing today – this helps all of us keep track of progress made against the Maputo Action Plan.

We note in particular the information shared by **Mozambique**. The December deadline for clearance was missed but a wealth of data and a clear plan for the way forward have been shared in a proactive manner. We look forward to celebrating the completion of clearance later this year.

Regarding **Niger**, while we regret to hear that new contaminated areas have been found, we take note of Niger's intention to submit another extension request and we believe this is certainly the right course of action. We will read the request with attention.

We thank **Mauritania** and **Cyprus** for putting forward extension requests in accordance with the timelines agreed by States Parties.

In **Mauritania's** extension request, the explanations on progress made in 2011-2015 are clear, consistent, and offer the right level of detail. Unfortunately this is not the case for Section 11, mostly because Section 11 is about a political process as opposed to a land release process. We hope Mauritania will be able to share the following information to support its request:

- What precise office(s) or branch(es) of the government is in charge of “engaging dialogue with all stakeholders”, and when will this start?
- How will the mapping data be acquired, by whom, and within what timelines?
- Who is in charge of developing an action plan if necessary?

In the current circumstances we support the request put forward by **Cyprus**. We wish to recall the Security Council's Resolution 2026 (of 14 December 2011), that noted “the continued danger posed by mines in Cyprus”, and urged “rapid agreement on facilitating the recommencement of demining operations and clearance of the remaining minefields.” We note that negotiations have restarted and we hope for positive developments in the near future.

We note that **other extension requests** have been submitted in recent days. A process on extension requests has been agreed by all States Parties some time ago that is meant to ensure that all States Parties are able to review requests and that those who wish can engage in dialogue and ask questions.

This also ensures fairness vis-à-vis other requesting states. When requests come in just a few days before the meeting, this adequate review and informal dialogue are not possible. We see this as incompatible with the spirit of transparency and partnership that should prevail in this forum.

We are deeply disturbed that **Ethiopia** is currently in violation of the Mine Ban Treaty, having missed its June deadline for clearance. Putting in an extension request, even at this very late hour, is no substitute for implementing Article 5. The significant survey and clearance tasks that remain will indeed take time. But above all they require a true commitment to do what is required by the treaty, including a genuine survey and clearance process. The ball is firmly in Ethiopia's court. We are certainly disturbed by the lack of information shared by Ethiopia in the past months and years. It is hard to assess a request that comes in so late, but we will read it with attention and share our observations with Ethiopia and with members of the Committee.

Regarding **Senegal's** deadline extension request, we have a number of questions and comments. In past years we have regularly heard from the authorities that the security situation was very worrying and that there was a need to wait for the peace process to conclude before any clearance could take place. We are very surprised, then, to see in the extension request submitted just a few days ago that there is a five-year action plan with a 2016 starting date. How has the situation on the ground changed recently, and is the intention still to wait for the conclusion of the peace talks? Or do the authorities intend to at last work to ensure access through zone-by-zone dialogue, starting urgently?

In addition we note that many confirmed hazardous areas are in the vicinity of active military installations. What is the feeling of urgency related to clearing these zones? Why not start right now with Djirak and around other military installations where certainly there are no problems with access? Considering that the stagnation of recent years has led to the departure of a major operator and a number of donors, could the military contribute to clearance to humanitarian standards?

We hope these important questions will be discussed with the Committee on Article 5.

### **Remarques en français sur le Niger, la Mauritanie et le Sénégal**

En ce qui concerne le **Niger**, bien que nous soyons peines d'entendre que de nouvelles zones contaminées ont été découvertes, nous notons l'intention du Niger de soumettre une demande de prorogation de date butoir. Il s'agit certainement de la mesure adéquate à prendre et nous lirons la demande avec attention.

Nous remercions la Mauritanie d'avoir soumis une demande de prorogation de date butoir en respectant le calendrier défini par les Etats parties. Dans la demande, les progrès réalisés en 2011-2015 sont expliqués de manière claire, cohérente et avec un niveau de détails approprié. Malheureusement ce n'est pas le cas de la Section 11, mais c'est probablement parce que la Section 11 porte sur un processus politique et non un processus de remise à disposition des terres (land release). Nous espérons que la Mauritanie pourra fournir les renseignements suivants pour étayer sa demande :

- Quelles entités du gouvernement sont chargées « d'engager un dialogue avec l'ensemble des intervenants », et quand cela commencera-t-il?
- Comment les levées topographiques et cartographiques seront-elles acquises, par qui, et selon quel calendrier ?
- Quelle entité sera en charge « d'élaborer un plan d'action » si nécessaire ?

En ce qui concerne la demande de prorogation de date butoir du **Sénégal** nous avons un certain nombre de questions et commentaires. D'abord, au cours des dernières années nous avons régulièrement entendu, de la part des autorités, des références à la précarité des conditions de sécurité ainsi que l'intention d'attendre la conclusion du processus de paix avant de procéder à la dépollution. Quelle surprise, donc, de voir dans la demande un plan d'activités sur cinq ans qui commence en 2016. En quoi la situation sur le terrain a-t-elle changé récemment, et est-ce que l'intention est toujours d'attendre la conclusion des discussions de paix? Ou bien les autorités comptent-elles enfin assurer un dialogue pour accéder aux zones les unes après les autres en commençant le plus tôt possible?

Par ailleurs, nous notons que de nombreuses zones confirmées suspectes sont à proximité d'installations militaires en activité. Quel est le sentiment d'urgence lié à la dépollution de ces zones? Pourquoi ne pas procéder dès maintenant à la dépollution à Djirak et autour d'autres zones militaires ou des problèmes d'accès ne se posent probablement pas? Considérant que la stagnation des dernières années a engendré le départ d'un important opérateur et de donateurs, est-ce que l'armée elle-même pourrait contribuer à la dépollution de ces zones en respectant les standards humanitaires?

Nous espérons que le Comité sur l'article 5 discutera de ces questions avec le Sénégal.