

AGENDA ITEM: ARTICLE 5 - THAILAND



Comments on Thailand's Mine Clearance Deadline Extension Request

Intersessional Meeting of the Mine Ban Treaty

8 June 2017

We thank Thailand for submitting a request on time thus allowing the committee and other partners to carry out their tasks as decided by States Parties at the Third Review Conference of the Convention.

A lot of progress has been made in Thailand towards better defining the size of contamination through survey. The initial size of contamination has been greatly reduced, but there is still a lot of space for improvement in the understanding of contamination.

Among the positive points of the request:

- Thailand intends to better apply the land release methodology and we were pleased to see this reiterated.
- Thailand will cover 85% of the cost of its mine clearance program in 2017-2018, which places the country among the world's top contributors to their own national programs.
- We welcome the Thailand Mine Action Center's openness for collaboration with partners such as the Cambodian Mine Action Center and others in the region.
- Thailand also hosted the Chair of the Article 5 Committee earlier in the year thus demonstrating transparency in its operations.

Among the points requiring improvement in the coming weeks:

- The main point is the need to flesh out the plan. All extension requests should always include a detailed explanation of "who will work where, and when." Pages 18 and 19 offer an outline but they lack detail.
- This will require the willingness to assess how much land can currently be released annually through non-technical survey, technical survey and clearance, and the development of proper estimates for monthly and annual outputs during the extension period. The plan should include an early effort to better define the extent of remaining contamination. Such a plan will also greatly assist Thailand in determining the exact time needed to solve the remaining contamination problem. Looking at the current rate of land release

in Thailand, it is difficult to understand how it will be possible to complete clearance within a five-year extension period.

- Regarding border areas:
 - At the border with Lao PDR, it appears that 96% of the border is already demarcated, so a plan should already be presented on how clearance will proceed.
 - At the border with Cambodia, difficulties have significantly hampered progress in the past. Within the framework of the General Border Committee, Thailand and Cambodia have agreed to support demining at the border – so we would like to hear what the next steps are. A revised extension request should explain who is in charge of further discussions, what the timeline is, and which concrete land release activities will be put in place.

We are confident that Thailand can submit a revised extension request with support from the Committee, and we look forward to reading it.