

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 5 BY THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

I. Progress in implementation

1. The Democratic Republic of the Congo report covered the period 1 January 2014 – 31 December 2017. The Democratic Republic of the Congo reported a remaining challenge in at 31 December 2013 of 1,711,763.02 square metres. The Democratic Republic of the Congo reported addressing 103 mined areas, releasing a total of 1,717,327 square metres, including; 333,934 square metres in 2014, 493,066 square metres in 2015, and 379,859 square metres in 2016, 445,150 square metres in 2017 and 65,318 square metres for the period January to March 2018. The Democratic Republic of the Congo also reported that it had suspended or closed four mined areas measuring 90,229 square metres.
2. The Committee observed that the information provided by the Democratic Republic of the Congo on progress in implementation allowed for some comparability with that provided previously. The Committee noted that the Democratic Republic of the Congo could increase clarity on progress in implementation through the use of terminology contained within, and in a manner consistent with IMAS (i.e. “confirmed hazardous area”, “suspected hazardous area”; disaggregating data by activity that is non-technical survey, technical survey and clearance.
3. The Committee noted that the Democratic Republic of the Congo could provide more clarity by employing the Guide to Reporting adopted by the Fourteenth Meeting of the States Parties.

II. Clarity regarding remaining challenge

4. The Committee observed that the Democratic Republic of the Congo had provided clarity regarding its remaining challenge. The Committee noted that the Democratic Republic of the Congo reported that, as of 31 March 2018, 56 mined areas remaining to be addressed measuring an estimated 535,359.20 square metres, including 27 mined areas in 9 provinces remaining from its initial survey and 29 newly mined areas in 9 provinces, including 16 areas measuring an estimated 286,640 square metres and a further 15 mined areas with an area yet to be determined.
5. The Committee noted that further information from the Democratic Republic of the Congo regarding its remaining challenge by providing annual milestones for addressing its remaining challenge would be welcome. The Committee observed that, with survey activities ongoing, the remaining challenge in the Democratic Republic of the Congo could be further clarified by presenting more precise information on the number of areas and size of these areas required to be addressed through the use of terminology contained within, and in a manner consistent with IMAS (i.e. “confirmed hazardous area”, “suspected hazardous area”; disaggregating data by activity that is non-technical survey, technical survey and clearance.

III. National plans for clearance and survey

6. The Committee observed that the Democratic Republic of the Congo had tasked NPA to undertake resurvey of 27 mined areas in 9 provinces remaining from its initial survey in 2018. The Committee noted that updates on the results of survey and their impact on the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s projected annual milestones and remaining challenge would also be welcome.

7. The Democratic Republic of the Congo further reported that it had not been able to conduct survey in Dangu territory in Upper Province and Uele and Aru territories in Ituri Province due to insecurity. The Committee observed that regular updated information on the security situation in Ituri Province would be welcome.

IV. Efficient and expedient implementation

11. The Committee welcomes further information from the Democratic Republic of the Congo regarding progress in implementation of actions contained within the Maputo Action Plan, in particular Action #9.

V. Actions in accordance with plans in extension requests and decisions on them

12. The Committee recalled that the Third Review Conference had requested the Democratic Republic of the Congo to provide updates with respect to a variety of commitments made and milestones contained in its 2014 extension request. The Committee further recalled that the Democratic Republic of the Congo had committed to develop an operational plan by 1 January 2015. The Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from the Democratic Republic of the Congo submitting an updated operational plan.
13. The Committee also noted that the Convention would benefit from the Democratic Republic of the Congo informing the States Parties, by 30 April of each year, as relevant, on the following: (i) the number, location and size of remaining mined areas, plans to clear or otherwise release these areas and information on areas already released, disaggregated by release through clearance, technical survey and non-technical survey, (ii) efforts and the results of efforts to mobilise funding to contribute to covering the costs of implementing the Democratic Republic of the Congo's national plans for survey and mine clearance, (iii) efforts and the results of efforts undertaken to strengthen national capacity to implement the Democratic Republic of the Congo's national plan, and, (iv) Whether circumstances which had previously impeded the timely implementation of the Convention were continuing to affect the fulfilment of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's obligations, (v) additional efforts made by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the results of these efforts to make use of the full range of practical methods to release, with a high level of confidence, areas suspected of containing anti-personnel mines, in accordance with the United Nations Mine Action Standards.

VI. Mine risk reduction

15. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has reported in detail on the actions it has taken to effectively exclude the population from areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines. The Democratic Republic of the Congo reported for 2017 and 2018 4,188 sessions for a total of 77,772 beneficiaries. The Committee noted the actions taken by the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Mine Risk Education and welcomes further information on its efforts to ensure that these activities are age-appropriate and gender-sensitive, coherent with applicable national and international standards, tailored to the needs of mine-affected communities and integrated into ongoing mine action activities, namely data gathering, clearance and victim assistance as appropriate.