



Comments on Eritrea's extension request

9 April 2014

We thank Eritrea for preparing and submitting its extension request.

We have read the request with attention, and we have shared comments with the national authorities. To us, unfortunately, the request does not provide sufficient information to be the basis for a decision, and we have a number of important questions that have remained unanswered for the moment. You will find our detailed comments on the table outside the room.

First, if our reading of the request is correct, the area that must be cleared or resurveyed is a little over 33 km². And the current clearance capacity working at full pace could clear a little over 15 km² in five years. So we are a bit puzzled about what happens to the remaining 18 km². Is there an expectation that it will entirely be cancelled by non-technical survey? And also, what measures will be taken to ensure that clearance teams are in a position to work at the full pace and optimal speed that the request refers to?

Second, while the number of areas and area coverage are provided, a proposed timeline for operations is not given. Priority areas for resurvey are identified, but there is no evident differentiation between areas earmarked for clearance and areas earmarked for resurvey [aside from the resurvey of the 49 mined areas.] Our understanding of the extension request process is that any state submitting a request should provide a detailed timeline of proposed activities -- listing *who* will work *where*, and *when*.

Finally, the projected costs for the extension period are about seven million dollars, all to be raised nationally. For the last two years, Eritrea dedicated about a quarter of a million dollars annually to mine action. The request does not provide information on how funds will be raised, or assurances that the proposed funding has already been committed by the government.

In light of these important questions we would like to encourage Eritrea to do like many other requesting states have done, and to seize the opportunity of submitting a revised extension request that will clarify these points and that will answer any other questions from the Analyzing Group.

Thank you.