

**Comments on South Sudan’s Article 5 Extension Request, delivered by Mine Action Review
Intersessional Meetings, 30 June – 2 July 2020**

Mine Action Review welcomes South Sudan’s detailed extension request and commends the significant progress that has been made so far to better understand the remaining anti-personnel mine challenge and cancel land found not to be contaminated. All the more notable that this progress has been made despite the insecurity and fighting that South Sudan has faced and continues to face.

South Sudan is seeking a five-year extension up to 9 July 2026 and is committed to full completion of clearance of its anti-personnel mine contamination in this time. However, it is essential to note that South Sudan plans to address all contamination (i.e. including anti-vehicle mines, on roads, from cluster munition remnants, and other UXO, in addition to anti-personnel mined area) in this extension period. Hazardous areas (CHAs and SHAs) relating to contamination other than anti-personnel mines currently make up roughly half of the total contaminated area. Progress in clearance of anti-personnel mined areas is therefore contingent on the progress in survey and clearance of other contamination too. It is Mine Action Review’s opinion that in light of this, the requested deadline looks overly-ambitious and should be viewed more as an interim extension request.

While we recognise that all hazardous areas will ultimately have to be addressed, as a State Party to the Mine Ban Treaty and the Article 5 obligation to complete clearance “as soon as possible”, South Sudan should consider prioritising survey and clearance of hazardous areas that are confirmed or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, (along with mined roads), especially also given their humanitarian and socio-economic impact.

The extension request would benefit from separating out the data relating to anti-personnel mined areas, so it is clearly disaggregated from data relating to purely anti-vehicle mined areas and mined roads. Additional survey is still needed to more accurately determine the actual extent of anti-personnel contamination in the SHAs, which make up roughly three quarters of the overall size of anti-personnel mine contamination in the database, and many of which are known to be over inflated.

It would be helpful if South Sudan could provide more information about the steps that it is taking to mainstream gender across its mine action programme and what plans it is putting in place to ensure that diverse needs are taken into account during the period of the extension request. For example, measures being taken to ensure that ethnic or minority groups in affected communities are consulted during survey and community liaison activities and that their needs are taken into account in the prioritisation, planning, and tasking of survey and clearance activities.

Lastly, we would welcome South Sudan’s commitment to provide annual updates through Article 7 reports and a revised workplan midway through the extension period, as well as updates on its plans for establishing a sustainable national capacity to address the discovery of previously unknown mined areas following completion (i.e. residual contamination).

Thank you.