



## **ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION**

### **2012 Intersessional Meetings**

#### **Article 5 Extension Process**

##### **Statement by Australia**

Statement delivered by Mr Philip Kimpton, First Secretary, Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations, Geneva

22 May 2012

Madame Co-Chair

Thank you for the opportunity to address the topic of the extensions process for Article 5 clearance deadlines. We also appreciate the President's summary of considerations relevant to this topic.

The key extensions process decisions were adopted in late 2006 by the 7MSP under the Australian presidency of the Convention. The decisions came after lengthy and careful consultation amongst States Parties in the lead up to 7MSP. Since that time we have followed its application closely – Australia has served in the Analysing Group for four years and has gained considerable experience in its operation.

In our view, the extensions process serves States Parties, and States requesting extensions in particular, and the Convention's community well. It also serves to strengthen the Convention, its goals and objectives. We recognise it is a time-consuming and resource intensive process, that puts pressure on Missions in Geneva, capitals, the ISU and is demanding for States requesting an extension. However, fundamentally the process facilitates a thorough consideration of requests for an extension of the clearance deadline – a consideration that deserves close attention by States Parties and others in the Convention's community given the humanitarian objectives at play and the continued risk that mined areas pose for civilians.

Of course, our hope, along with many others here, was that few States would need to draw on the deadline extension provided for in Article 5. This sentiment was reflected back in the Nairobi Action Plan from the First Review Conference. This hope has not been fulfilled, unfortunately, with requests for extension outnumbering the declarations of completion. But we recognise progress is being made and we congratulate States Parties that have made significant strides forward in mine clearance, often with substantial investments of national resources.

Drawing on our experience of the extensions process, we feel that the process could be improved in places – but overall should not be weakened or result in a lessening of the rigour that previous requests for extensions have undergone.

There is scope to improve the quality and consistency of the extension requests themselves. These are the primary source of core information about the situation in each affected State. The information presented could be more succinct and conveyed in a comparable fashion. Readily available information on the existing challenge, what work has been done, what remains to be done and how, and the resource requirements and international assistance needs should be provided by requesting States. Data essential for considering the request should be clearly set out. A standard request form could be utilized by requesting States with the assistance of the ISU.

We support enhancing the ability of the Analysing Group to consider each request for extension. Without wanting to increase the already heavy workload of the Analysing Group, steps to achieve this could include convening briefings from organizations involved in mine action in the requesting State, such as the UN, demining operators and the national Mine Action Centre director. Views on the request could be provided by relevant organizations, such as the ICRC, NGOs, GICHD, operators and UN agencies. Formal advice could be obtained by the Analysing Group as envisioned by the original decision from 7MSP.

We have welcomed the strengthening of the decisions taken by the MSPs on extension requests, evident in recent years. The decisions are clearer and in some cases set out additional commitments made by the requesting State. Where possible, milestones, benchmarks or indicators could be agreed with the requesting State and included in the decision. This would facilitate reporting by the requesting State and monitoring of progress by all States Parties year to year. Understanding progress in States which have been given an extension, especially those where longer extensions have been provided, is a priority. This would improve transparency and act as additional incentive for States with extensions to meet their commitments.

Thank you.