

**ICRC Statement
Article 5 Extension Process**

**Standing Committee on Mine Clearance,
Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies
22 May 2012**

The International Committee of the Red Cross would like to lend its support to the various proposals for improving the Article 5 extension process.

We note that two small, but important, changes have been implemented this year, which have already enhanced the process. Firstly, to ease the workload of those invited to comment on the extension requests, the ISU prepared summaries of key information, which it extracted from the requests. From the ICRC's perspective, this greatly assisted in preparing our comments. In future, it would also be helpful (and less work for the ISU) if the state submitting the extension request could itself include the main information required to assess the request, such as the period of time requested, clearance achieved to date, the remaining extent of contamination and anticipated funding, in a short Executive Summary. Some requests have been extremely long and it can sometimes take a lengthy examination to extract this essential information. In the event that the State submitting the request does not include such a summary, the ICRC would support the suggestion that the ISU prepare it.

Secondly, the Analysing Group invited input on the extension requests from a wider group of experts than has been provided in the past. This enabled the Analysing Group to receive a greater number of comments, including from organisations that know very well the context at hand. We understand that this initiative has been of great benefit to the Analysing Group and would recommend that such broad consultations continue to be part of the extension request process in future.

We were also interested by ICBL's suggestion to dedicate some "small group sessions" at future Intersessional Meetings to the presentation and discussion of extension requests. In this regard, we commend Afghanistan for the goodwill and transparency it has shown in hosting a lunchtime discussion with UNMAS on their extension request later this week.

Regarding other possible improvements to the process, the ICRC would like to call attention in particular to the ICBL's proposal, referred to by Norway and Australia, that benchmarks be included in both the analyses and decisions, against which states' commitments and targets as set out in the extension request could be compared against actual implementation in future. This would provide a useful point of reference for the state party having submitted the extension request while also enabling the states parties to better monitor progress during any extension period granted.