

**ICRC Statement
Angola's Extension Request**

**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 commend Angola for submitting its extension request in a timely manner, in accordance with the process established by the States Parties. This has enabled the consideration of the request by a number of actors ahead of today's meeting and for more fruitful discussions to ensue.

Throughout the first 10 years of the Convention's entry into force, Angola has reported significant achievements in mine clearance. Despite these efforts by both the national authorities and the international community, Angola remains one of the most mine-affected countries in the world and ongoing efforts are required to address the remaining contamination as efficiently and effectively as possible.

In its Extension Request, Angola has presented good arguments for its inability to meet its initial 10-year clearance deadline. The ICRC nonetheless regrets that a decade after the end of the conflict the precise extent of the contamination is still unknown. We hope that Angola will do everything in its power to remedy this situation and proceed with the planned national survey and mapping exercise as a matter of urgency.

In keeping with decisions on past Extension Requests, Angola should seek only the minimum time necessary to assess relevant facts and develop a detailed plan for mine clearance based on these facts. According to the Extension Request, Angola intends to complete a nationwide non-technical survey by 2013. It has also proposed to conduct a mapping exercise from 2013-2016, in addition to updating and correcting the database and carrying out training and capacity building.

In regards to the survey, we note that a survey plan is lacking from the Extension Request, which would enable the States Parties to assess if the estimated timeframe is realistic. Moreover, the extension request states that the survey "has been delayed [in the past] by systematic technical and administrative reasons." We would like to know if Angola has put systems in place to ensure that these problems will be overcome. We also understand that the mapping exercise should be able to proceed concurrently with the survey, which will enable Angola to proceed more quickly to a determination of the remaining extent of contamination.

The ICRC would also welcome further information on the budget for each proposed activity, including what national funds Angola has already secured for clearance, and any possible shortfalls. If fundraising strategies for the extension period exist, more information on them could be provided.

Subject to clarification of these points, we consider that a three-year interim extension (to 1 January 2016) could be more appropriate than the five-year period currently sought. This should enable Angola to complete the survey, develop a detailed plan and return to the States Parties by March 2015 with an extension request to complete the clearance of all remaining contamination.

Finally, in light of the humanitarian goals of the Convention, it would be beneficial if the Extension Request laid down the criteria that Angola intends to apply to prioritize clearance of some areas over others. In particular, we would welcome any information to clarify how Angola will determine priorities between commercial demining aimed at improving the economic wellbeing of the citizens and state, and humanitarian demining aimed at reducing the number of victims of anti-personnel mines or improving access to arable land.