The ICBL finds it highly regrettable that Guinea-Bissau has made so little progress to date on survey and clearance, which is not in keeping with the treaty's requirement to clear all mined areas as soon as possible. The reasons for the slow progress are mostly tied to a lack of resources for clearance. Indeed, the level of international support has been very low, which the request explains in part by noting the lack of donor presence in Bissau. But Guinea-Bissau has had UNDP technical assistance for many years and has participated regularly at meetings of the Mine Ban Treaty, where it has had ample opportunities to present its plans and needs for assistance. In addition, Guinea-Bissau has not contributed any of its own resources, which is a critical sign of national ownership.

More extensive survey work and more effective use of a land release approach may also have enabled Guinea-Bissau to meet its Article 5 deadline. It is good to hear that such activities are now underway and that the goal is to finish clearance by the original deadline.

The ICBL recommends that Guinea-Bissau be granted a two-month extension since we believe that States Parties needing additional time for clearance should always seek and receive the shortest possible extension period. But Guinea-Bissau should be called upon to do its utmost in the coming year to ensure there is sufficient funding to clear the identified mined areas by its deadline and other States Parties should respond to calls for assistance. Guinea-Bissau should also be encouraged to make a national contribution to mine action in 2011 as a sign of its commitment to finishing the job as soon as possible. Finally, Guinea-Bissau should commit to using all safe and effective methods to release suspected hazardous areas, including technical and non-technical survey, in order to finish its Article 5 obligations in the most efficient manner.