

**Tenth Meeting of the States Parties to the
Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines
Geneva, 29 November – 3 December 2010**

Notes for ICRC intervention on updates by States Parties that were granted an extension or still have obligations under article 5

Thank you Mr. President

The ICRC would like to thank all States Parties that provided yesterday and today an update on their clearance progress.

We would like to make a few remarks on States Parties that provided an update on their clearance progress since they were granted an extension request in 2008 and 2009. The ICRC was pleased with the level and quality of reporting of many States Parties that chose to report on each of the Cartagena Action Points relating to the implementation of their article 5 obligations.

We regret however the absence of information on the situation of the Republic of Congo and of an update of clearance activities by Yemen. Concerning the Republic of Congo, it is important for the credibility of the Convention and it is in the interest of all States Parties to prevent a situation where the Republic of Congo will find itself in violation of its Article 5 obligations by November 2011. We hope that this State Party will communicate with you Mr. President and with the co-chairs on clearance to share an update of their situation as soon as possible.

We were pleased indeed to hear from Venezuela that clearance has started and that they believe they could even finish the clearance of their military bases ahead of schedule.

We are concerned about the few countries we have heard which have reported little progress or reported that they have not managed to reach their clearance targets for 2010. We listened with great attention to the update given by the United Kingdom on the clearance activities undertaken on the Falklands/ Malvinas Islands and the lessons learnt from this first project.

We believe however that the position of the UK today is creating a new situation for the Convention as a whole that needs to be looked at by all States Parties and could be in particular discussed in the Standing Committee on general status and operations of the Convention. The decision granting a 10 year extension to the UK taken by the 9th Meeting of States Parties noted: ‘that the UK reaffirmed its commitment to clear or ensure the clearance of all anti-personnel mines in all mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible. The UK clarified its understanding that the obligations under Article 5 fell to the Government of the United Kingdom’. We believe that the actual position of the UK, when it affirms that mine clearance is a lower priority, is a re-opening of the decision made by States Parties at the 9th Meeting of States Parties.

Furthermore, the decision taken at the 9th Meeting of States Parties noted also that ‘the UK agreed to provide as soon as possible, but not later than 30 June 2010 a detailed explanation of how demining is proceeding and the implications for future demining in order to meet the UK’s obligations in accordance with Article 5.4 b) and c) of the Convention’.

We regret that the UK is not in a position today to provide a detailed explanation of its future demining plans and that by its statement, it is presenting a position that it did not take in 2008 at the time when it obtained a 10 year extension request.

Let me now turn to a few remarks concerning the updates given by States which have clearance deadlines in 2012 or later.

We were pleased to hear of the good progress made by Cyprus, Nigeria, Burundi, Ethiopia and Serbia. We congratulate them for their efforts and the statement that they are likely to complete their article 5 obligations on time.

We are concerned that one State Party that has a deadline in 2012 has not taken the floor today and we hope to hear from Eritrea at the next intersessional meetings in June 2011. 4 out of 5 States Parties that have a deadline in 2012 will probably request an extension. 6 States Parties requested an extension this year, probably 4 more next year. The trend is continuing and this should be a concern of all States Parties.

Finally, we have noted that the lack of adequate resources, whether in the form of financial resources, expertise or equipment, is the circumstance most frequently cited by mine-affected States Parties as an impediment to fulfilling their Article 5 obligations. We urge donor countries to continue to provide such support until clearance obligations have been completed. We also encourage mine-affected States Parties to ensure that mine clearance remains a national priority and to make efforts to identify additional support for completing their obligations.