



Agenda item 11 (b)  
Consideration of the general status and operation of the Convention  
Clearing Mined Areas  
Wednesday 1 December

We congratulate those States Parties that have declared compliance with Article 5 and cleared all mined areas since the Second Review Conference, including Nicaragua in June 2010.

We are pleased to see a 20% increase in the clearance of land from 2008 to 2009. According to the Landmine Monitor, about 198 square kilometres were cleared in 2009, compared to 160 km<sup>2</sup> in 2008, thus being the highest annual clearance figure ever recorded. This positive trend is a promising sign for the Convention. Nevertheless, we are concerned that 39 States Parties still have to fulfil their Article 5 obligations under the treaty, in addition to other affected countries that have yet to accede to the Convention.

We encourage all those States Parties with Article 5 obligations to do everything possible to ensure timely planning, prioritization and implementation of their treaty obligations, starting with the identification of affected or suspected areas and ensuring the protection of civilians until the mines in those areas are cleared and destroyed. In doing so, States Parties should focus on the impact of clearance and simultaneously, ensure that the needs and voices of populations at risk are appropriately addressed.

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Most of these States Parties are developing countries and therefore still require assistance to comply with their obligations in a timely and effective manner. The United Nations is conscious of this need and thus stresses the need to maintain momentum and continue supporting affected countries, territories and communities.

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We are also concerned that too many States Parties have submitted extensions of their Article 5 deadlines. We understood years ago that a number of them would required these extensions, but some of the extensions could have been prevented with better planning, political will and sustained funding, both national and international. Acknowledging the importance of the earliest possible completion of Article 5 obligations, the United Nations Mine Action Team will focus a substantive part of the next International Meeting of National Mine Action Programme Directors and UN Advisers, in Geneva, in March 2010, to this article in the Convention.

Closely linked to clearance, the United Nations wishes to highlight the relevance and importance of Mine Risk Education in this context of numerous requests for clearance deadlines extensions. States Parties should make sure they put in place effective measures to protect civilians and affected populations while they continue to work towards meeting their clearance obligations. In this regard we invite all affected countries and mine action programmes to make use of the new MRE international mine action standards, adopted by the IMAS Review Board early this year. Also, there is still a need for new technology and approaches, including those related to land release, which is giving positive results with its combination of clearance, technical and non-technical survey.

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Clearance and mine risk education activities should be linked with development plans and efforts, so to facilitate development initiatives, such as the productive use of released land by the communities and the recovery and re-engagement of survivors in community life.

Mainstreaming a gender approach into mine action programming has proved to be beneficial in many ways, including in ensuring that mine action activities equally benefit women, girls, boys and men. The United Nations Mine Action Team has recently revised its Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes, which are accessible in E-MINE ([www.mineaction.org](http://www.mineaction.org)).

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Mine clearance is an urgent task and the one most that ultimately will save lives and limbs. The mine that poses little or no threat today may kill or maim tomorrow. Floods could bring mines back to surface, earthquakes and landslides could wash them down on river floors or

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non-populated mined areas could suddenly be crossed by refugees and other displaced people escaping from active hostilities or natural disasters, thus becoming a tangible threat to civilians, humanitarian workers and peacekeepers.