

ANGOLA

CMIDAH PRESIDENT GENERAL SANTANA ANDRE PITRA

Excellences

MIIME ACTION NATIONAL AUTHORITY

"RETROFF"

PM

Honorable Ambassador Matjaz Kovacic, President of the 12MSP

Distinguished representatives of State Parties

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the delegation accompanying me and on my own, I congratulate you Ambassador/President of the 12th Meeting of States Parties and their collaborators on the excellent organization of this event.

Mr. President

This meeting is of extreme importance to Angola for two main reasons, namely:

- Within a month we will complete 10 years as State Party to the Ottawa Convention
- Angola has just submitted an extension request for article 5 of the Convention.
- Angola as State Party is strongly committed and has sought to fulfill in the best possible way all of its obligations and which was done so.
- Comply in a timely manner with article 4.

Under Article 6 - International cooperation and assistance, Angola within the defense and security committee of SADC, cooperates multilaterally with all its members and bilaterally with neighboring countries - Zambia, DRC, Congo and Namibia mainly.

Under Article 9, the Angolan constitution and other legal documents - civil code, general employment law, etc.. - There are legislative provisions that generally prohibit the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines as well as other lethal means and liable to be charged criminally including the imposition of penal sanctions to prevent or suppress any prohibited activity.

- Angola intends to fully comply with article 5, and taking advantage of its third point, we had clearly and convincingly submitted on 30th March 30 our request for an extension for a period of five years.

We responded in a timely manner and on three occasions to all additional questions that were presented by the analysis group.

Mr. President
Distinguished representatives from State Parties

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is well known that Angola was one of the most mined countries in Africa and the Angolan people still think that the anti-personnel mines continue to be violators of basic political, civil and cultural rights and hinders the normal socio-economic development of the country.

The burning desire of the Angolan people to see "Angola without mines" has also led it become one of the strategic objectives of the Angolan executive and as already stated in its agenda.

Mr. President

Angola is strongly committed to fully comply with the Ottawa Convention, including Article 5. The extension request we submitted will not only solve some internal problems, and I assure you Mr. President that we will not ask for any more interim period.

To demine a country like ours, with over thirty years of wars - colonial, foreign invasions and civil war with various stakeholders and destructive military and various types of mines implanted is a challenging task as the government is supporting the main costs for demining, given the fact that the traditional donors conference for this purpose never took place. I ask you Mr. President to understand and support us, agreeing with our request.

Mr. President

Excellences

Ladies and Gentlemen

As I mentioned above, the five-year extension is already included in the agenda of the five-year Angolan government and the best help you can give us is to grant us the requested period, this time it would allow us to prepare a final request, reasoned and substantiated with an excellent database, with a real picture in terms of size and quantification of what has already been cleared and what is still to be demined.

Angola stipulates that the requested period of five years is reasonable, and that will be the bedrock for the mapping project - *sybiosis of non-technical research with technical research supported with the latest geographic information systems.*

There are other constraints that we have presented, for example the working period which has to stop between 6/7 months due to the rains on an annual basis. If the data in the LIS served to develop the first five-year plan - a national mine action strategy 2006-2011, dragged along some weaknesses that we have corrected and complemented by a technical research in order to obtain a reliable baseline.

One of the assumptions of our request is the density of contamination that your analysis group questions. For us, it (density) is typified by the kind of wars that Angola has suffered - anti-colonial, guerrilla, against regular army, foreign invasions by regular armies and civil war without rules on the principles of planting of mines this being the atypical density.

The work of the database must be constantly updated and without time limit, with the collaboration and expertise of all public operators, private, national and international data gathering, in completing and submitting the forms according to the required standards.

Obviously, we cannot assure you a 100% that we will not make mistakes, however we are committed not repeat past mistakes, surpassing all the incongruities including those mentioned by the analysis group on our request.

It is the intention of my government to strengthen the capacity of operators and encourage the creation of national NGOs in order to comply with the numbers presented.

The plan presented by the public operator is directed specifically to social and economic development of the country, at both local and central levels in the areas of agriculture, geology and mining, energy and water, construction and urban planning, telecommunications and other activities that will obviously contribute to the elimination of those areas referred to at the baseline, through clearance operations.

Mr. President

Despite the financial crisis sweeping over Europe, we will continue to make an appeal for aid to international NGOs represented in our country to continue their demining work of high merit.

Angola has requested an extension period of five years - from January next year until January 2018.

We will implement a series of technical and administrative, logistical, operational activities, to clearly identify the results and determine the remaining challenge, through:

- A) – Strengthening the ongoing non-technical research throughout the territory, in order to reduce the areas of polygons overrated by the LIS and still find areas not previously identified.
- B) – Implement the mapping project, aimed at designing a geographical image, supported by geographic information systems of the areas already cleared and those yet to be cleared supported by the most emerging technologies.
- C) – Develop training, planning and advocacy activities aimed at correcting the current discrepancies between the central database and all public and private operators.
- D) - Continue the ongoing demining activities and enhance the concepts, techniques and mechanisms of land release and management and quality control.

Hopefully with these measures, after five years, Angola may submit a more suited extension request to full comply with Article 5 and then say out loud "Angola is mine free country".

We are aware of our responsibilities and in intend to fully comply with the Ottawa Convention and transform Angola a country free of landmines, that is an Angolan determination,

On behalf of the executive and the Angolan people, I would like to thank the donor community that despite the various crises we have been through always helped us in this long journey.

Angola has fully complied with the other articles of the Convention and we pledge to fully comply with Article 5 with even a greater effort.