



Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Twelfth Meeting of States Parties

Article 5 extension requests

Statement by Australia

3 December 2012

Statement delivered by Ms Namdi Payne, Second Secretary, Australian Permanent Mission, Geneva

Mr President

As Australia is taking the floor for the first time, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as President of this meeting and offer you our full support. We would also wish to thank the outgoing President H.E. Prak Sokhonn for his leadership in the past year and the analysis of the extension requests.

Afghanistan

Australia thanks Afghanistan for its request for extension to its clearance deadline under Article 5.

Australia recognizes that for States Parties with mined areas, the process to develop requests for extensions, respond to questions from the Analysing Group, and present the requests to the Meetings of States Parties is time and resource intensive.

Nevertheless, Australia considers that despite its burdens, the process brings a great deal of transparency and depth to the Meeting of States Parties' decisions on extensions.

Australia recognises that a rigorous extensions process is an important factor in the case of countries such as Afghanistan, which plans for transition of the process to national ownership. It improves States' reporting capacity and helps those States set targets suitable to their national circumstances.

Australia also welcomes Afghanistan's annual targets which will allow States Parties to assess progress over time. Australia encourages Afghanistan to ensure full compliance with Article 5 to clear all anti-personnel mines in mined areas.

We note the extension request acknowledges that a lack of sufficient funding is one of the major risk factors for Afghanistan to comply with its Article 5 obligations. We encourage donors to continue funding for Afghanistan to ensure this country meet its clearance targets.

Angola

Australia thanks Angola for its request for extension of its clearance deadline under Article 5.

Australia urges Angola to provide a more detailed plan for their extension request. In particular, additional information on achievements to date as well as target dates for updating the database would be welcomed. Australia encourages Angola to continue to allocate national funding to its mine action program to ensure full compliance with Article 5.

We will look forward to further reporting on these details from Angola at all forthcoming opportunities, including the 13th Meeting of States Parties.

Zimbabwe

Australia thanks Zimbabwe for its request for extension of its clearance deadline under Article 5.

It is unfortunate to hear that Zimbabwe's progress on clearance during its two Article 5 extensions was not enough to complete clearance. However, we welcome the progress in working with international partners to build its capacity, improve efficiency, and develop survey and clearance plans. Australia supports a further extension period for Zimbabwe and urges Zimbabwe to prioritise survey and clearance of mined areas particularly areas with high impacts on civilians.

We look forward to updates from Zimbabwe with respect to the milestones contained in the request which will help States Parties to assess progress in implementation during the extension period.