

ICRC statement on Mozambique's Extension Request,
13th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Geneva, 2 December 2013

The International Committee of the Red Cross supports Mozambique's request for a 10-month extension until 31 December 2014.

Mozambique has achieved highly impressive results during its first extension period since 2008, thanks in large part to a high level of national ownership and commitment, which in turn has attracted the strong support of international partners. The integration of demining into Mozambique's Programme for Poverty Reduction, combined with the steps taken to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of Mozambique's demining capacity have clearly borne fruit, and serve as a valuable example to other States facing similar completion challenges.

Mozambique has submitted a detailed work plan for the extension period, as well as thorough information regarding the status, location and size of each area in question. To facilitate more effective monitoring of implementation as Mozambique heads towards completion, the ICRC supports the recommendation of the Analysing Group that Mozambique provide by 1 March 2014 a report on progress to date in implementing the work plan, and monthly benchmarks for survey and clearance activities until 31 December 2014.

Mozambique has clearly articulated the potential challenges it may face in completing its Article 5 obligations. One such challenge is the reoccurrence of security problems, which has led to the intermittent suspension of demining operations, including the current suspension of some operations in Sofala province. Another challenge relates to the ability to continue demining operations throughout the year.

In addition, as observed by the Analysing Group, Mozambique's capacity to meet the proposed extended deadline is subject to the conclusion of a cooperation agreement with Zimbabwe in regards to clearance of the border minefields. If such an agreement can be secured in the near future, this will provide a very positive example of cross-border cooperation and enable Mozambique to meet a 10-month extended deadline. On the other hand, we note with concern the observation of the Analysing Group that failure to meet the 10-month deadline due to a combination of challenges would leave Mozambique in non-compliance with its obligations under the Convention. We therefore urge Mozambique and all of its partners, including Zimbabwe, to spare no efforts in working towards the goal of a "mine-free" Mozambique in 2014.