

**14th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention,
Geneva, 30 November-4 December 2015**

Statement by Norway on Requests for Extensions under Article 5

Thank you, Mr. President.

We thank the countries who have presented their extension requests as well as the Committee on Article 5 Implementation for the detailed analysis of extension requests submitted this year. We also appreciate the efforts made by the countries applying for extensions in preparing their requests.

We would like to take this opportunity to offer some general observations on the extension request process and the requests submitted this year.

Norway is concerned by the continued large number of requests for extensions under Article 5. Some extensions have been inevitable due to the magnitude of the mine problem, but the majority of requests are a result of a combination of factors, many of which are not directly related to the mine problem itself.

We are also seeing an increasing number of requests from States Parties that have already previously received extensions. It is critical for the credibility of the Convention that extension requests are seen as an absolutely last resort. The primary legal obligation under Article 5 is to complete clearance "as soon as possible".

Not only is this important in order to fulfill the legal obligations of the Convention, but also in light of the humanitarian imperative of protecting civilians in mine-affected areas.

We encourage mine-affected States Parties to seek the assistance of other States Parties as well as to engage the considerable expertise that resides in the international mine action community. As a general principle, we consider that affected States Parties should also dedicate national resources to fulfill their clearance obligations.

We believe the main implementation priority in the years ahead must be to ensure the timely implementation of Article 5 and to reduce the number of extension requests to a minimum.

Thank you.