



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

14th Meeting of State Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Statement on matters related to the mandate of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation

Geneva, 1 December 2015

Delivered by Mr. Bruno Donat, Chief, Geneva office, UNMAS

Mr. President,

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA)¹, comprising United Nations entities involved in mine action.

First of all, the United Nations iterates its congratulations to the Presidency, and appreciates your hard work and that of your team behind the organization of the 14th Meeting of States Parties.

The United Nations also thanks you for the report on the activities of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation.

Article 5 completion is one of the key pillars of the Convention, however for affected states, it may arguably be the most challenging to fulfil. Clearance of landmines allows for delivery of humanitarian aid, the rebirth of a developing economy and has a positive and tangible socio-economic impact on affected communities. Nevertheless, of the 59 States Parties that have reported mined areas since the entry into force of the Convention, less than half have fulfilled their obligations under this Article.

The United Nations takes this opportunity to, once more, congratulate Mozambique, which recently declared completion of Article 5 obligations. Mozambique was once considered one of the most heavily contaminated countries and although it will continue with clearance of explosive remnants of war, its government reports that the threat posed by anti-personnel mines is now gone. The National Demining Institute (IND), with the support of UNDP alongside implementing organizations and donors, made this endeavor possible.

¹ The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) / United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) (Chair), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Development Programme (UNDP), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) (Observer), and the World Bank (Observer).



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Mr. President,

The United Nations is concerned by the increasing number of extension requests and stresses the importance of States Parties' compliance with their Article 5 obligations. This is critical not only for the credibility of the Convention, but also for the credibility of international humanitarian law as a whole. Keeping in mind that many States Parties cannot finish the work alone, the United Nations supports most of those States Parties in trying to meet their extended deadlines.

For example, in Yemen, which submitted a request for an extension for five years under Article 5, UNICEF is currently coordinating with the Executive Mine Action Center YEMAC, the Ministry of Education and UNDP the screening of exams centers before children go to schools to ensure that these locations are free of mines and ERW. As part of this project, Education Offices distribute mine risk education material to school children and to the surrounding communities.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNMAS assisted the national authorities to meet their obligations, including being involved in developing the "Demining Plan in the DRC" of the *Centre Congolais pour la Lutte Antimines* (CCLAM), despite the continued dire security conditions and insufficient information on suspected hazardous areas (SHAs). In addition, UNMAS coordinated the clearance of about 70 out of 155 SHAs, and that provides a positive momentum for the DRC to fulfill its obligations within the extended deadline.

In South Sudan, where ongoing conflict continues to preclude access by clearance teams and impede progress towards fulfilling Article 5 obligations, UNMAS continues to work with the National Mine Action Authority and implementing partners to make significant strides in accessible areas. So far in 2015, some 1,679 Hazardous Areas have been closed.

Mr. President, in closing:

The task is not simple, and in many instances, countries recovering from conflict require critical support, especially through international cooperation and assistance.

Thank you.