

**Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention  
on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,  
Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel  
Mines and on Their Destruction**

29 September 2020

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**Eighteenth Meeting****Geneva, 16-20 November 2020**

Item 11 of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of requests submitted under Article 5**

**Analysis of the request submitted by South Sudan  
for an extension of the deadline for completing the  
destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance  
with Article 5 of the Convention\***

**Submitted by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation (Austria,  
Canada, Norway and Zambia)**

1. South Sudan deposited its notification of succession to the Convention on 11 November 2011. The Convention entered into force for South Sudan on 9 July 2011. In its initial transparency report submitted on 3 December 2012, South Sudan reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. South Sudan was obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 9 July 2021. South Sudan, believing that it would be unable to do so by that date, submitted on 27 March 2020 to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation a request for an extension of its deadline until 9 July 2026.
2. On 25 June 2020, the Committee on Article 5 Implementation (“the Committee”) wrote to South Sudan to request additional clarification on information provided in its request for extension. On 21 August 2020, South Sudan submitted to the Committee a revised request for extension incorporating additional information provided in response to the Committee’s questions. South Sudan’s request is for 5 years, until 9 July 2026.
3. The request indicates that in January 2011, South Sudan recorded 1,962 hazard areas measuring 408’169’663 square metres contaminated by all types of explosive ordnance, this total included 1’225 anti-personnel and anti-tank minefields measuring 334’863’267 square metres.
4. The request indicates that during the period from 1 January 2011 to 30 June 2020, South Sudan addressed a total of 1,609 hazards measuring 388,658,553 square metres (96.5% against total area of hazards). As a result of these activities, South Sudan destroyed 8,242 anti-personnel mines, 1,260 anti-tank mines, 16,262 cluster munitions, and 74,037 items of unexploded ordnance.
5. The request indicates that during this period South Sudan addressed 815 anti-personnel mined areas measuring 205,103,102 square metres. 385 mined areas measuring

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\* This document was scheduled for publication after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter’s control.



28,064,019 square metres were cleared, and 430 mined areas measuring 177,039,083 square metres were cancelled. The Committee noted that the effort of South Sudan has resulted in 82% of South Sudan's Payams (the third administrative level in the country) having no clearance tasks remaining.

6. The Committee welcomed the information provided by South Sudan and noted that, in addition to anti-personnel mines, anti-tank mines and other explosive remnants of war also pose extreme risks to the civilian population and to the implementation of development activities. The Committee noted that South Sudan's effort to implement Article 5 was only part of the totality of efforts required to address explosive hazards in South Sudan. The Committee noted the importance of South Sudan continuing to report on its progress disaggregated by type of contamination to the extent possible, and in a manner consistent with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), disaggregating by area cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey and addressed through clearance.

7. The request includes information on the methodologies used to address mined areas, including non-technical and technical survey, and the use of ground penetrating radar to address mined roads. The request also indicates that over the course of the initial extension request period, the South Sudan National Technical Standards and Guidelines (NTSG) were developed based on the International Mine Action Standards and tailored to local context to outline the technical requirements of all demining operations in South Sudan. The request further indicates that the NTSGs are regularly updated with revisions discussed by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and implementing agencies and approved by the National Authority. The Committee noted that the use of land release standards has enabled South Sudan through re-survey to significantly reduce its remaining challenge. The Committee further noted the importance of South Sudan keeping its national mine action standards up to date in accordance with the latest IMAS, adapting them to new challenges and employing best practices to ensure efficient and effective implementation.

8. The request indicates that throughout the period of implementation of the mine action programme there have been challenges with the management of data, including two occasions when efforts to upgrade the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) software package led to serious data loss, which has inhibited efforts to present an entirely accurate record of the history of mine action in South Sudan. The Committee noted the difficulties faced by South Sudan in information management and noted the importance of maintaining a national information management system containing accurate and up-to-date data at the national level on the status of implementation. The Committee also noted the importance of the design and implementation of information management systems ensuring that they are nationally owned, sustainable and take into account the need for data that can be accessed, managed and analysed post-completion.

9. The request indicates the following factors, which in South Sudan's view, acted as impeding circumstances during South Sudan's initial Article 5 deadline: (a) security-related access restrictions, (b) poor state of infrastructure, (c) impacts of seasonal rains on roads, (d) effects of displacement (including loss of population, collapse of agricultural production and famine), (e) impact of displacement also includes loss of trained demining personnel.

10. The request also indicates several complications and challenges that have impacted South Sudan's efforts to address its Article 5 obligations, including, a) the complex nature of explosive ordnance contamination and the need to address all explosive ordnance concurrently, b) an original inflated survey estimate, c) re-occurrence of violence, and, d) the need to develop specific methodologies to address technical characteristics of mines present in South Sudan.

11. The request indicates that anti-personnel mines continue to have humanitarian and socio-economic impacts in South Sudan, with minefields contaminating or denying access to land that would otherwise be used productively. The presence of anti-personnel mines in South Sudan has been shown to pose significant blockages to the development of agriculture and livestock, natural resources, and hinders access to community infrastructure, including water points, schools and health clinics. Anti-personnel mines have also been shown to affect displaced populations and are a leading cause of accidents to highly mobile populations. The

request further indicates that since South Sudan joined the Convention it has recorded 586 mine and unexploded ordnance (UXO) victims, and that more than 4,500 were recorded in the ten years leading up to independence. The Committee welcomes the information provided by South Sudan and encourages South Sudan to continue providing information in an age and sex disaggregated manner. The Committee noted that progress in the implementation of Article 5 during the requested extension period had the potential of making a significant contribution to improving human safety and socioeconomic conditions in South Sudan.

12. The request indicates a total remaining Article 5 challenge consisting of 122 anti-personnel mined areas measuring 7,337,011 square metres, including 64 confirmed mined areas measuring 2,866,375 square metres and 58 suspected mined areas measuring 4,470,636 square metres. South Sudan indicated an overall remaining challenge for all device types of 353 hazardous areas measuring 19,511,119 square metres, including 254 confirmed hazardous areas measuring 11,566,151 square metres and 99 suspect hazardous areas measuring 7,994,959 square metres.

13. The request indicates that the remaining challenge related to anti-personnel mines totals 122 mined areas measuring 7,337,011 square metres, including 64 confirmed hazardous areas measuring 2,866,375 square metres and 58 suspected mined areas measuring 4,470,636 square metres. The Committee welcomed the information provided by South Sudan on its remaining challenge and noted the importance of South Sudan providing information on the remaining challenges, disaggregating by ‘suspected hazardous areas’ and ‘confirmed hazardous areas’ and their relative size, as well as by the type of contamination.

14. As noted, South Sudan’s request is for 5 years, until 9 July 2026. The request includes a detailed, costed and multi-year work plan consisting of three qualitative and quantitative components, (i) methodologies to be used, (ii) milestones for completion and, (iii) prioritisation of areas.

15. The request includes the following milestones for implementation during the period 2021 – 2025 of the extension:

- (a) 2021: 20 hazardous areas measuring an estimated 1’478’400 square metres.
- (b) 2022: 20 hazardous areas measuring an estimated 1’170’400 square metres.
- (c) 2023: 20 hazardous areas measuring an estimated 1’170’400 square metres.
- (d) 2024: 25 hazardous areas measuring and estimated 1’170’400 square metres
- (e) 2025: 16 hazardous areas measuring an estimated 1’078’000 square metres.
- (f) 2026: 15 hazardous areas measuring an estimated 462,000 square metres

16. The Committee noted a minor discrepancy between South Sudan’s remaining challenge and the area projected to be addressed through re-survey and clearance over the course of extension period. The Committee further noted the importance of South Sudan annually updating its national work plan based on new evidence and reporting on adjusted milestones.

17. The work plan also indicates that in the Greater Equatoria region 45 anti-personnel and anti-tank minefields measuring 690’239 square metres have been prioritised for re-survey. The request further indicates that 40 minefields cannot currently be accessed due to on-going fighting or general insecurity, with these tasks to be addressed by manual clearance teams once accessibility is secured. The work plan also indicates that in the Greater Upper Nile region 13 anti-personnel and anti-tank minefields measuring 3,800,951 square metres have been prioritised for re-survey.

18. The request identifies that the achievement of the projected outputs as given in the work plan is based on several assumptions that could positively or negatively impact on the implementation timeframe, including, i) freedom of access, no resumption of fighting, ii) sustained or increased funding, iii) few additional minefields recorded, iv) that the largest recorded hazards are cancelled, or reduced through survey, v) that projected rates of land release are sustained, and vi) that, COVID-19 insecurity and bad weather will limit the production of all clearance teams. The request also identifies several risk factors that could also positively or negatively impact on the request timeframe, including a) insecurity; b)

economic; c) environmental; d) funding; e) failure to reconfigure clearance capacities; and, f) COVID-19 or other diseases have a negative effect on operations.

19. The request indicates that mine risk education (MRE) has been integrated into the work of all teams conducting mine action. In addition, eleven national organisations also conduct MRE within the country. The request indicates that the approach adopted for mine risk education in South Sudan is in line with the commitments of the States Parties in the Oslo Action Plan.

20. The request indicates that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered in the development of the work plan. In this regard, the request indicates that suspect hazardous areas are identified through the engagement of community liaison teams that are then refined by the deployment of non-technical survey teams. The gender-balanced nature of all community liaison teams in South Sudan enables them to speak to all sections of the community and thereby to build a comprehensive and inclusive picture of contamination and its impact, allowing for prioritization of clearance tasks in accordance with the needs of the community as a whole and ensuring that no-one is left behind.

21. The request indicates that, in order to achieve the projected milestones given in the work plan, organisations currently working in support of South Sudan will need to reconfigure their personnel to form larger teams to clear ground more efficiently. The Committee wrote to South Sudan requesting further clarity on the current and potential reconfiguration of the existing capacity, as well as additional capacities required for South Sudan to implement the existing work plan for completion, including an expected timeline for recruitment, training and management for the given reconfiguration to take place. South Sudan responded by indicating that “the transition to larger teams will not require any significant injection of equipment, training, or recruitment” and that “the skills and resources are already available”. South Sudan also indicated that, to pilot the transition to larger teams, UNMAS is planning to reconfigure its resources from November 2020, noting that there is no certainty of sustained funding for these teams. South Sudan further indicated that, if the teams were to be re-structured, South Sudan would require an additional 2 manual clearance teams to ensure the required capacity.

22. The request indicates that current funding received totals approximately US \$41 million per year, with the largest contribution provided through the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), providing support of US \$34.6 million, including US \$25.2 million to mine action contracts. The request indicates that the United Nations’ assessed budget received by UNMAS is primarily used to support the UNMISS mission, as well as to address other ammunition management and security concerns. The Committee wrote to South Sudan requesting further information on its efforts to build in mitigation measures in response to a shift in UNMISS priorities or in the case of a drawing down of UNMISS in South Sudan. South Sudan responded that South Sudan and UNMAS, together with the current Chair of the Mine Action Support Group, are developing a resource mobilization strategy to further support the South Sudan mine action programme. The Committee noted that two concept notes for funding additional capacity are attached as annexes to the request.

23. The request indicates that South Sudan will require a total of US\$ 148 million for activities related to the implementation of Article 5 during the extension period. The request further indicates that the Government of South Sudan provides limited support to mine action, covering the running costs of the National Mine Action Authority, and has made no resources available for clearance or risk education activities.

24. The Committee wrote to South Sudan requesting further information on South Sudan’s plan to develop a sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas following completion. South Sudan responded that the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) will be the future of mine action in South Sudan, however, the NMAA has struggled to access financial support. The Committee noted the importance of efforts to develop the capacity of the NMAA. The Committee further noted the importance of South Sudan developing a resource mobilisation plan and making use of all mechanisms within the Convention to disseminate information on challenges and requirements for assistance.

25. The request further indicates that South Sudan is “seeking to develop a sustainable national capacity that may respond to those requests for assistance that arise”. The request

indicates that, in support of this aim, UNMAS is seeking funding for a national organisation to deploy explosive ordnance disposal teams in 2021. The intention is that those teams will report to the NMAA, who will direct their tasking and monitor their performance.

26. The request indicates that the remaining contamination has a socioeconomic impact on the population. The Committee noted that South Sudan had provided data on mine victims disaggregated by age and sex in keeping with commitments of the States Parties. The Committee noted that Article 5 implementation during the requested extension period had the potential of making a significant contribution to improving human safety and socio-economic conditions in South Sudan.

27. The Committee noted that the request includes other relevant information that may be of use to the States Parties in assessing and considering the request, including further detail on socio-economic implications of remaining contamination, further information on landmine victims and response to accidents undertaken by the Government of South Sudan, additional detail on planning and prioritisation, information on current demining capacity, maps and tables relating to land addressed during the initial extension period, post clearance outcomes, and financial considerations, as well as links to annexes pertaining to the request.

28. In recalling that the implementation of South Sudan's national demining plan may be affected by security-related access restrictions and the continued impact of COVID-19, and noting that the sector will require minor configurations to enable more efficient clearance of minefields, the Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from South Sudan submitting to the Committee periodic updated detailed work plans with the first of these being submitted by 30 April 2022, and the second by 30 April 2024, for the remaining period covered by the extension. The Committee noted that these work plans should contain an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines using terminology consistent with IMAS, annual projections of which areas and what area would be dealt with during the remaining period covered by the request and by which organisation, matched to a revised detailed budget.

29. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the information provided in the request and subsequently in responses to the Committee's questions is comprehensive, complete and clear. The Committee further noted that the plan presented by South Sudan is workable, lends itself well to be monitored, and states clearly which factors could affect progress in implementation. The Committee also noted that the plan is ambitious and that its success is based on significant co-contribution from international funding, access to the remaining contaminated areas, the re-structuring of current clearance teams, and the recruitment of two additional clearance teams. In this regard, the Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from South Sudan reporting annually, by 30 April, to the States Parties on the following:

(a) Progress made relative to the commitments contained in South Sudan's annual survey and clearance plan during the extension period, providing information in a manner consistent with IMAS on the remaining challenges, disaggregating by 'suspected hazardous areas' and 'confirmed hazardous areas' and their relative size, as well as by the type of contamination and in accordance with the land release methodology employed (i.e. cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey, or cleared through clearance);

(b) The impact of annual progress on annual targets as given in South Sudan's work plan including adjusted milestones with information on the number of areas and amount of mined area to be addressed annually and how priorities have been established;

(c) Progress on security-related access restrictions and potential positive or negative impacts regarding re-survey and clearance of mined areas;

(d) Efforts made to reconfigure their personnel to form larger teams and the results of these efforts;

(e) Updates regarding the development and implementation of a detailed, costed and multi-year plan for context-specific mine risk education and reduction in affected communities including information on the methodologies used, the challenges faced and the results achieved, with information disaggregated by gender and age;

(f) Updates regarding the structure of South Sudan's mine action program, including existing and new organisational and institutional capacities to respond to residual contamination following completion; and

(g) Resource mobilisation efforts, external financing received and resources made available by the government of South Sudan to support implementation efforts, including through efforts to facilitate operations of international demining organisations and indigenous capacities, and the results of these efforts.

30. The Committee noted the importance, in addition to South Sudan reporting to the States Parties as noted above, of keeping the States Parties regularly apprised of other pertinent developments regarding the implementation of Article 5 during the period covered by the request and other commitments made in the request at intersessional meetings, Meetings of the States Parties and Review Conferences as well as through its Article 7 reports using the Guide for Reporting.

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