

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

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Consideration of requests submitted under Article 5

Request for extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with article 5 of the Convention Executive summary

Submitted by Sudan*

1. A number of conflicts have contaminated Sudan with anti-personnel (AP) and anti-tank (AT) mines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) beginning with the Second World War. Since its independence in 1956, Sudan has suffered a number of civil wars in which landmines were an integral part of the conflicts having been used by all parties. The first civil war was from 1955 to 1972 and the second civil war began in 1983 and officially ended on 9 January 2005 with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). During these conflicts, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) used huge quantities of mines to defend their positions and to disrupt each other's movements and operations. Furthermore, after the separation of Southern Sudan in July 2011, the new conflicts in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states resulted in additional contamination by AT mines and other ERW.

2. Landmines and ERW in the Sudan threaten civilians and impede economic development and recovery. Contaminated land reduces agricultural activity and productivity and thereby the sustainable livelihoods of rural communities. Landmines on key logistical routes continue to hamper safe and free movement, trade and humanitarian interventions, and endanger the lives of local communities, internally displaced persons (IDP's), refugees, and staff of the aid community. The presence and/or perceived threat of landmines/ERW prevents and delay IDPs and refugee populations from returning to their hometowns, and as a result, constrain recovery, reconstruction and development efforts in landmine/ERW and war affected areas.

3. In addition to the above socio-economic impact of mines, a total of 1,866 landmine/ERW victims have been registered in the Republic of Sudan since the inception of the mine action programme in the country. While the accident occurrence rate overall

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has decreased since 2005, 2011 and 2012 have recorded the highest number of accidents ever registered. This is due to the new conflict in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states.

4. The Government of Sudan signed the AP Mine Ban Convention on 4 December 1997 and ratified it on 13 October 2003. It became a State Party of the Ottawa Convention on 1 April 2004. Mine clearance in the Sudan started in the early 90's but it intensified after the signing of the Nuba Mountains Ceasefire Agreement in 2001, between the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the SPLM. A tri-partite Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed among the GoS, the SPLM and UNMAS on 19 September 2002 in Geneva, which provided the framework for mine action activities to be undertaken throughout the Sudan. In addition, the CPA and the UN Security Council Resolution 1590 further enhanced the mandate and role of the UN in mine clearance in the Sudan.

5. The National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) was established by Presidential Decree No. 299, dated 24 December 2005, followed by its official launch in a high level ceremony attended by the President of the country on 7 March 2006 in Khartoum. Based on the issuance of the Presidential Decree, the National Mine Action Policy Framework was developed, approved by the High National Mine Action Committee and passed by the council of ministers of the Government of National Unity of the time on 6 August 2006. The NMAA under the chairmanship of the Minister of Defence with other line ministries as members meets annually to review the progress of mine action in the country and to make specific recommendations regarding mine action operation to NMAC if needed. The National Mine Action Centre (NMAC) was established in 2005 to work in partnership with United Nations Mine Action Office. The NMAC, up to present day, has been following the implementation of the obligations of the GoS under Ottawa and other relevant treaties on mine action. It also, as part of its mandate, approves mine action strategies and plans at national level through its sub-offices in the country. The NMAC has its headquarters in Khartoum and has six sub-offices in the regions affected by landmines and ERW.

6. The nature of the conflict in Sudan was such that records were rarely kept and those records that do exist are often inaccurate and/or out of date. The true extent and impact of Sudan's landmine problem remained unknown. Following the peace agreement between the GoS and SPLM, several surveys were carried out, including a survey by the Survey Action Centre (SAC) and the Swiss Demining Federation (FSD) during the period of 2002 – 2007 to identify the level of contamination. Mixed survey teams were being deployed for the first time in GoS and SPLM areas of the country.

7. In spite of the above surveys, the actual baseline was established only when the Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) was carried out through which the results of all previous surveys as well as other available information were reviewed and re-considered. The LIS was conducted from July 2007 – Feb 2009 and covered the States of Blue Nile, South Kordofan, Red Sea, Kassala and Gedaref. The LIS resulted in the identification of a total of 221 locations suspected to be contaminated with Mines and ERW. Today around 300 sites are registered as being affected by mines and ERW.

8. Since the LIS, other ad hoc reports on mines and ERW contamination in form of DAs were provided and recorded in the data base. Since the completion of LIS the number of Dangerous Areas (DA)¹, Mine Fields (MF)², and Suspected Hazardous Areas(SHAs)³

¹ Dangerous Area (DA): Refers to an area suspected to contain mines/explosive remnants of war that is reported as a result of mine accident/ explosive remnants of war investigation, by MRE teams, local population or military personal. DA can be mined area, Battle area or a spot UXO.

² Minefield (MF): Minefield is an area contaminated with Anti-personnel mines or Anti-tank mines with a clearly defined polygon. The polygon of minefields is developed as a result of technical survey operation.

has grown considerably. This includes areas that were not considered by the LIS. Considering this, the total contamination for AP mines within the national database includes a total of 362 DAs measuring more than 289 square kilometres, a total of 240 MFs measuring around 23 square kilometres, and a total of 136 SHAs measuring above 27 square kilometres. The overall number of the sites is 738 for all three categories which cover an area of more than 340 square kilometres. It should be noted that, unfortunately, due to security concerns, survey could not be completed in all five States suspected to be contaminated with mines. During the period that the LIS was conducted, there was still an on-going conflict between SAF and Bija forces in Red sea, Kassala and Gedareef states. Nonetheless, the survey was completed in Blue Nile and South Kordofan.

9. In spite of vast challenges, the Sudan mine action program has succeeded in reducing the total number of known hazards by 87%. However the remaining 13% of known hazard areas comprises 47% of total contamination in terms of square meters, due to difference in sizes of each hazardous area. Since the initiation of mine clearance operations Sudan has addressed AP mines containing 324 DAs measuring 273 square kilometres, 182 MFs measuring more than 20,273 square kilometres and 108 SHAs measuring more than 21,273 square kilometres. It should be noted that if the original LIS baseline had remained the same, it would be safe to say that Sudan would have fulfilled its obligations under Article 5. Unfortunately, based on new findings, the baseline, as mentioned in section I, has expanded significantly. To improve the quality of data captured in the database, data clean-up is being conducted. It included desktop cleaning which included manually going through LIS and other hazard records in the archive. Data clean-up is still on-going and field verification is yet to be done.

10. Although significant progress has been made in the past years, a total of 27 square kilometres remains to be addressed as follows: a total of 38 DAs measuring more than 17 square kilometres, 58 MFs measuring around 3 square kilometres and 28 SHAs measuring more than 6.5 square kilometres. The overall area is around 27 square kilometres.

11. There are a number of circumstances why Sudan has not been able to fulfil its obligations under Article 5: (a) Active conflict: Sudan joined the APMBT in March 2004 while active conflict was on-going in some of its regions before the signature of CPA between North and South Sudan signed in January 2005 and the Eastern Peace Agreement signed in 2006. As a consequence some time was lost from the ten year mandate. (b) Initial limited operations in the North: because of security concerns, there were very limited survey and clearance operations in North Sudan from March 2004 to January 2007. As a result, Sudan lost 3 years of 10 years duration to fulfil its article 5 obligations at the start. (c) Renewed and on-going conflicts: in June 2011 a new conflict emerged in South Kordofan and Blue Nile which resulted in the ceasing of mine action operation in both of these states. The conflict is still on-going and since June 2011 to date no mine action survey/clearance operation has been conducted in both of the mentioned states meaning 2 years of operational seasons have been lost. It is to be noted that South Kordofan is the highest AP mine contaminated state. According to some reports recontamination has taken places in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states as result of the recent conflicts. (d) New Hazards found: As the surveys were carried out and the LIS which was completed in 2009 came to a conclusion, new hazards were found which were added to the IMSMA data base. (e) Climatic Factor: Three months out of the year mine action comes to a halt because of heavy rain in most part of Sudan. Lack of roads and other infrastructure make it impossible for teams to carry out their operations and reach hazardous areas during the rainy season.

³ Suspected Hazards Area (SHA): Refers to an area suspected of having a mine/ explosive remnants of war hazard. An SHA can be identified by an impact survey, other form of national survey, or a claim of presence of explosive hazards.

12. Given the above, the GoS is requesting a five year extension (until March 31, 2019) of its Article 5 deadline to address all known and suspected areas contaminated not only by AP but also AT mines and UXO in the States of Kassala, Gadaref, Red Sea, Blue Nile, South Kordofan states and Darfur. With passage of time and positive change in security and access for mine clearance teams in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, humanitarian demining operations will resume fully, based on availability of sufficient funds. Nonetheless, a plan is already in place to carry out necessary survey and mine clearance activities in those states should security permit. The National Mine Action Centre of Sudan is insuring that this capacity is in place.

13. The main challenge Sudan faces in order to comply with its Article 5 obligations is the survey and clearance of the known 279 remaining areas (150 DAs, 58 MF, 71 SHAs) containing mines and ERW measuring a total of 38 square kilometres. 50% of the known affected areas are located in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states which is considered insecure for humanitarian demining operations at this stage due to the conflict which has been on-going since June 2011. Nevertheless, Sudan has designed and approved a National Mine Action Plan 2013-2019 (1 March 2013 – 31 March 2019) in order to tackle the problem as the access situation permit. The goals of the Multi Year Work Plan 2013 – 2019 are to:

- (a) Ensure coordination of the demining programme through monitoring, quality control and quality assurance, and information management, advocacy and resource mobilization.
- (b) Conduct survey to determine more clearly the extent of the remaining challenge in DAs and SHAs and carry out subsequent necessary clearance.
- (c) Clear all known MF, conduct survey and clear all new suspected areas.
- (d) Consolidate mechanisms to conduct effectively all activities aimed at prevention of mine and UXOs accidents in affected communities, and update the country's data base on mine victims.
- (e) Consolidate the mainstreaming of mine action in the social and economic plan (PES) and ensure the effectiveness of budgeting by all key sectors of development from the provincial to district level.
- (f) Ensure sustainability of the national capacity to deal with residual issue of landmines and UXOs

14. At the time of writing this report, there are only two organizations, National Demining Units (NDU) and Technical Development Initiative (TDI) which are operational in the field of Mine Action survey and clearance. TDI is deployed and focused on ordnance disposal operation activities in Darfur. This leaves the National Demining Units (NDU) as the only experienced Mine Action Operator implementing non-technical and technical survey and clearance operation in Sudan.

15. In addition to the above capacity, during year 2012 JASMAR and FPDO has shown interest in developing their capacity and stepping in non-technical and technical Survey and Clearance operations. Both organizations applied for accreditation. After thorough review, both JASAMR and FPDO received desk accreditation from the NMAC and applied for funds through a response to a recent UNOPS Request for Proposal. NDU and the two national NGOs are committed to remain engaged in Sudan program until the Sudan's compliance with its Article 5 obligations, subject to availability of financial resources.

16. In order to enhance the operational capacity of NDU, FPDO and JASMAR, based on grants from a UK fund through UNOPS in New York, Mine Wolf and TDI have been contracted to train the staff of the three organizations in operating Mine Wolf machine and

Leadership and EOD 2. The training started in mid February 2013 for Mine Wolf and is expected to finish end of March and TDI started leadership and EOD training in mid-March 2013 and is expected to finish beginning of May 2013.

17. Since June 2011 the Sudan Mine Action program is facing challenges in accessing most Mines/ERW contaminated areas. As the IMSMA figures indicate, South Kordofan state has the highest level of contamination. The greatest unknown at this stage is when the security situation in Southern Kordofan and part of Blue Nile states will be stable enough for commencing demining operations? Thus all 3 operators will be deployed to Eastern and Blue Nile states for the time being.

18. In General, in the next five years, non-technical survey, technical survey and clearance operations will be conducted mostly in eastern states and north of Blue Nile state. As the security permit technical survey and clearance will be considered for South Kordofan and the rest of Blue Nile as well. There is a need to conduct General survey operation and Landmine Impact Assessment on the previously recorded hazards in IMSMA data base in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states.

19. The expected milestones to be achieved are as follows:

Year	Hazards to be Addressed			Areas to be addressed	
	DA	SHA	MF	Cancelled through non-technical survey (square kilometres)	Released through technical survey / clearance (square kilometres)
2012-2013	6	4	3	1.6	0.4
2013-2014	60	25	20	7	6
2014-2015	30	16	15	3	5
2015-2016	20	10	8	1	5
2016-2017	15	8	6	0.7	3.3
2017-2018	10	5	4	0.6	2.4
2018-2019	9	3	2	0.4	1.6
Total	150	71	58	14.3	23.7

20. The total budget for 2014-2019 is US\$ 90.3 million: US\$ 70.7 million for land release activities, US\$ 18.8 million for mine risk education activities and US\$ 6.5 million for victim assistance activities. The government of Sudan remains committed to contribute to the Mine Action Program to fulfil its obligations under the AP Mine Ban Convention but the amount has not been confirmed.

21. Over the course of the extension period Sudan will keep the States Parties informed on updates to the MYWP due to possible new identified hazard areas will be.