

Ninth Meeting

Geneva, 24 – 28 November 2008

Item 11 of the provisional agenda

**Informal presentation of requests
submitted under Article 5 and of
the analysis of these requests**

**ANALYSIS OF THE REQUEST SUBMITTED BY ZIMBABWE 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 President of the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties on behalf of the States Parties mandated to analyse requests for extensions*

1. Zimbabwe ratified the Convention on 18 June 1998. The Convention entered into force for Zimbabwe on 1 March 1999. In its initial transparency report submitted on 11 January 2000, Zimbabwe reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Zimbabwe is obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 March 2009. Zimbabwe, believing that it will be unable to do so by that date submitted on 30 March 2008 to the President of the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties (8MSP) a request for an extension of its deadline. On 14 April 2008, the President of the 8MSP wrote to Zimbabwe to ask for clarifications on a number of points. Zimbabwe provided a response and subsequently, on 27 May 2008, Zimbabwe submitted to the 8MSP President a revised request for an extension incorporating additional information provided in response to the President's questions. On 1 October 2008, the President of the 8MSP wrote to Zimbabwe to request further information on a number of points. Zimbabwe replied to the 8MSP President by submitting, on 17 November 2008, a revised request for an extension incorporating additional information. Zimbabwe requests a 22-month extension (until 1 January 2011).

2. The request indicates that by the end of the 1976-1979 Liberation War, six minefields had been laid along Zimbabwe's borders with Zambia and Mozambique. The request further indicates that four other small minefields were emplaced further inland. In addition, the request mentions variously that mined areas either totalled 1,119.90 square kilometres and 1,071.4 square kilometres. The request also indicates that the area of some of the more recently discovered minefields remains unknown as these areas have not yet been surveyed. The States

* Submitted after due date and as soon as received by the Secretariat.

Parties mandated to analyse requests submitted under Article 5 of the Convention (hereafter referred to as the “analysing group”) noted the discrepancy in the estimates of mined areas provided in the request.

3. The request indicates that Zimbabwe has cleared and released 306.6 square kilometres. The request further indicates that clearance work was undertaken on an additional 169 square kilometres on the Rwenya to Musengezi minefield but, as no quality assurance was carried out and as mines continue to claim victims, this area will require re-clearance. In addition, the request indicates that an estimated 813.3 square kilometres remains to be dealt with. The request also indicates that Zimbabwe relies on surveys conducted in 1994 and that new surveys in all minefields are necessary to determine the accurate extent of the remaining contaminated area.

4. As noted, Zimbabwe’s request is for 22 months, until 1 January 2011. The request indicates that during this period Zimbabwe intends to seek and receive international technical assistance, the aim being to acquire up-to-date survey and demining techniques that will enable Zimbabwe to survey areas, to develop a plan which takes into account these techniques. The request further indicates that Zimbabwe will subsequently submit an additional request for a period of time to implement the plan. In addition, the request indicates that this second request for extension will include a time schedule and budget for implementing Article 5, including a projection of funds that may be required from the international community.

5. The request indicates the following as impeding circumstances: a) As a result of economic sanctions, Zimbabwe has been unable to access funds from the international financial institutions and has been unable to import equipment and contract commercial demining companies; b) Zimbabwe has experienced a shortage of demining equipment and current equipment is ageing; c) Zimbabwe has been unable to fully fund demining operations on its own and its national commitment has been limited by other pressing budgetary concerns such as food, power and fuel imports; d) Zimbabwe has not received support from the international community since 2000 and has been isolated from developments in demining techniques and standards.

6. The request indicates that, during the period of the extension, Zimbabwe will resurvey minefields where no demining takes place while continuing with demining of the Sango Border Post to Crooks Corner minefield. A squadron will be added to the current strength of deminers to accelerate the completion of this minefield by at least one year. A survey troop will be trained to resurvey all known mined areas and survey suspected contaminated areas. The results of these surveys will form the basis of Zimbabwe’s long term strategy.

7. The request indicates that thirty surveyors will be trained and divided into two teams. One team will conduct surveys of the known minefields starting in the second quarter of 2009. The request further indicates that it may be possible to release some areas without clearance. In addition, the request indicates that starting in 2009 the work of a second team will focus on newly discovered and two known unsurveyed minefields and will remain active for a two year period in case new minefields are discovered. The analyzing group noted that the plan proposed is contingent upon the receipt of international assistance in the form of funding and training for surveyors. The analysing group further noted that the request makes mention of a third minefield needing to be surveyed – Sango Border Post to Crooks Corner minefield – but that this minefield has not been incorporated in the survey plans.

8. The request indicates that currently demining operations are undertaken by military engineers. The request further indicates that both mechanical and manual means have been applied. Safe lanes are opened first by driving a bulldozer across the minefield with its blade raised, thereby detonating some mines. This process is repeated at least three times. A survey team then moves in with mine detectors carrying out manual clearance of the safe lanes. The safe lanes opened are then the baseline for the subsequent manual demining operation. Additionally, the request mentions that after the total clearance of a particular minefield, a quality control / quality assurance team would carry out quality inspection on the cleared area.

9. The request indicates that since 2002, Zimbabwe contributed US\$ 10,000 annually to demining operations. In discussions with the analyzing group, Zimbabwe advised that it was committed to continue funding demining operations at that level in the future. The request further indicates that a total of US\$ 6,856,000 is required for Zimbabwe to implement its plan during the extension period. Projected costs include US\$ 2,028,000 to resurvey known areas and US\$ 1,528,000 to survey the newly discovered minefields. An additional US\$ 3,030,000 is required to complete clearance of the Sango Border Post to Crooks Corner minefield by 2011. The analyzing group noted that of the \$6,856,000 total estimated budget some \$4,500,000 was devoted to transport and logistics. The analyzing group further noted that alternate transport arrangements and new survey methods, techniques and best practices could result in lower costs of carrying out these activities.

10. The request notes that the implementation of Article 5 during the extension period will open areas for agriculture, commercial farming, tourism, mining, game ranging and industrial sites and that local inhabitants will be able to freely access water sources, grazing land for their domestic animals and will generally be able to use land without fear.

11. The analysing group noted that while it may be unfortunate that after almost ten years since entry into force a State Party is unable to specify how much work remains and how it will be carried out, it is positive that such a State Party, as is the case of Zimbabwe, intends to take steps to garner an understanding of the true remaining extent of the challenge and to develop plans accordingly that precisely project the amount of time that will be required to complete Article 5 implementation. The analysing group further noted that by requesting a 22 month extension, Zimbabwe was projecting that it would need approximately two years from the date of submission of its request to obtain clarity regarding the remaining challenge, produce a detailed plan and submit a second extension request.

12. The analysing group noted that given the importance of external support to ensure timely implementation, Zimbabwe could benefit from developing as soon as possible a resource mobilisation strategy. The analysing group further noted that both Zimbabwe and all States Parties could benefit if Zimbabwe provided updates on progress made in obtaining clarity regarding the remaining challenge and in producing a detailed plan at meetings of the Standing Committees, at the Second Review Conference and at Meetings of the States Parties.