

ICRC statement on Niger's Extension Request,
13th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Geneva, 2 December 2013

The ICRC welcomes Niger's request for an extended clearance deadline until 31 December 2015 following the discovery of one known and five suspected mined areas in Bilma department in June 2011. As Niger's original deadline expired on 1 September 2009, in lodging this request Niger is undertaking to respect the commitments made by the States Parties at the 12MSP in relation to such exceptional situations.

While we regret that progress has been slow since the initial discovery of these mines in June 2011, we acknowledge the preparatory measures that Niger has taken for carrying out the necessary work, including the development of national standards, installation of and training in the Information Management System for Mine Action, the training of deminers and the training of community liaison agents to raise awareness. We hope that the work can now accelerate in light of the commitment of States Parties under the Cartagena Action Plan to destroy anti-personnel mines discovered after completion "as a matter of urgent priority".

As noted by the Analysing Group, the request is missing a detailed work plan with a monthly break-down of proposed work and more details of who will do what and when. The Analysing Group also noted that a revised Work Plan could greatly assist both Niger to more efficiently implement its survey and clearance programme, and the States Parties to monitor progress. We hope that Niger will be in a position to submit a revised work plan in the very near future and that it will report regularly on its implementation to the States Parties.

In this regard, the ICRC supports the Analysing Group's recommendation that Niger report by the Third Review Conference on progress achieved under the Work Plan, including the outcomes of the technical survey. We also agree with the Analysing Group's observation that Niger should consider using combined survey and demining teams to more efficiently deal with areas in remote locations.

Finally, the ICRC supports the recommendation of the Analyzing Group that Niger develop a resource mobilization strategy to meet funding shortfalls. We commend Niger for committing to finance 50% of the cost of the Work Plan, which demonstrates national commitment and ownership that should help in resource mobilization efforts.