

Mine Action Review statement on Article 5 Extension Request process discussions

Agenda Item 4: Matters related to the mandate of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation APMBC Intersessional Meetings, 20–22 June 2022

Thank you, Mr. President.

Article 5 stands at the heart of the Convention, as clearance of mined areas is fundamental to preventing people falling victim to anti-personnel mines and enabling communities to safely and productively use land, free from fear.

Mine Action Review therefore welcomes the opportunity to discuss the Article 5 deadline extension request process, which is an important component of Article 5 implementation. It is healthy and important that as a community we continue to look transparently at such processes, to both recognise what's working well, but also to identify where there is room for potential improvement.

We thank the ISU and past and present Committees on Article 5 for their commitment and hard work to support the extension request process and Article 5 implementation more broadly.

The number of extension requests is not an issue in and of itself, as it has been a positive development that the community has moved from having 10-year extensions to shorter, interim ones, in which affected States can provide more accurate details and plans for the duration of the request. It is, however, a problem when States submit poor quality requests, which lack key information such as concrete action plans for clearance or for any survey required in order to establish an accurate baseline of remaining mined areas. It is also extremely concerning that many states continue to seek extensions to their clearance deadline, without making meaningful progress to identify and address contamination between requests.

We believe it's important to look at the whole Article 5 process, not only the critiquing and decisions made on extension requests once they have been submitted. While analysis of submitted extension requests is of course important, and is a useful opportunity to encourage the affected state party to revise and strengthen the final draft and address queries, we also need to look at and help address the reasons for poor quality extension requests that miss key elements. For those states that require support during the process, we should collectively explore whether there are ways that we, as clearance operators, expert organisations, UNMAS, UNDP, donors, the Article 5 committee, the ISU and others can better collectively support affected states in their elaboration of their extension requests. A collaborative process, actively involving relevant stakeholders, nearly always results in a stronger outcome.

We are keen to hear from affected states themselves in this discussion, in particular what support, in their opinion, would be most useful to the extension request process and when? What are the main challenges in the process? Could they benefit from clearer guidance, for example, on what a strong extension request looks?

Well-drafted extension requests can be easily understood and analysed by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation and others, including donors who can clearly see what assistance is required and



can feel more confident in providing funding if there's a clear plan for completion, with concrete and realistic goals.

According to Mine Action Review's research, less than a handful of states are on track to meet their current Article 5 deadline, and even less are on track complete clearance by the 2025 goal. In fact, in 2025 there could be as many as 13 extension requests being sought, so it is well worth properly discussing this process well in advance.

Mine Action Review stands ready to actively participate and provide input in any further discussions on this topic convened by the Committee on Article 5 implementation. We hope these discussions can result in some useful reflections and recommendations to be considered at 20MSP.

Thank you.