

Comments on Sudan's extension request
17th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
26 November 2018

Sudan's request is well-designed, it addresses all required points, and is overall of good quality. Our main concern would be the major gap in funding for the extended period. Several of the questions we asked at the intersessionals were answered in the revised request, and we thank the Mine Action Center for this.

Among the positive points:

- Sudan has a good understanding of the extent of contamination in areas that are accessible, although the majority of these areas are suspected hazardous areas and therefore may be reduced or cancelled based on survey results.
- The extension request contains clear plans and budgets, with details for each province.
- The plan aims to address all mine and ERW threats, not just antipersonnel mines.
- Sudan has a functional national mine action programme, supported by UNMAS, as well as experienced national operational capacity.
- Land release processes are being used to address the threat efficiently, with survey being expected to result in cancellation of large amounts of suspected hazardous area.
- Sudan has outlined its approach to resource mobilization. Sudan expects to continue making national contributions to the mine action programme.

The most significant challenge is the inaccessibility of most contaminated areas due to ongoing insecurity. We welcome the fact that plans have been prepared to tackle the problem in the high threat areas, once conditions permit. We welcome Sudan's intention to keep States Parties informed annually about changes in access and progress in survey implementation.

Among the points that will require updates or additional information:

The 2019-2023 plan in Table 14 foresees that some 90% of suspected hazardous area will be released by survey. This percentage is higher than any outputs in 2013-2017 (averaging roughly 73% released by survey over the period.) We welcome clarifications on how this land release projection was made.

While the revised version of the request has improved in many respects, there are still discrepancies between the various explanations on areas to be surveyed and cleared. In particular, data in Table 14 should correspond with that in Table 30, but it doesn't. It would be good to fix these technical mistakes in an upcoming report to States Parties.

Two international demining organisations left Sudan in 2012 citing unworkable restrictions on their operations. It is positive to read that Sudan would now like to welcome more international operators. It would be useful to know more about what measures will be taken to facilitate their reentry, and to enable them to operate effectively.

We also noted that some questions asked by the GICHD at the intersessionals were not answered in the revised request. This included questions on how the budget was calculated, and recommendations to look into the low number of mines destroyed compared with the amount of land cleared.