Thank you, Mr. President,

We thank the Democratic Republic of Congo for its request and additional information, and the Committee for the analysis.

The ICBL notes that only a very small area of 0.09km² remains contaminated with landmines. We also note that little progress has been made since the last extension request granted at the Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties, with only 0.02km² cleared in 2020.

The ICBL has the following specific remarks on the extension request submitted by the Democratic Republic of Congo:

We believe that DRC should not require 3.5 years to complete the clearance of such a small area, and that remaining contamination could be cleared within one year with the application of the right capacity and resources. Prior to 2020, DRC was able to maintain clearance at above 0.2km² per year. Based on this rate the DRC should be able to complete clearance of its contamination in less than half a year.

The work plan should include a timeline for survey of the territories of Aru and Dungu, as well as a more detailed and targeted risk education plan in accordance with the requirements of the OAP.

We recommend that the Democratic Republic of Congo is granted one year to clear its very small remaining contamination and survey the territories of Aru and Dungu. We also recommend that the Democratic Republic of Congo is requested to provide a workplan for the survey of the two territories, and a more detailed risk education plan before March 2022.

We call on donors to work closely with the Democratic Republic of Congo and operators present in the country to ensure that the remaining areas are cleared as soon as possible.

We urge the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo to contribute national resources to land release operations and to demonstrate commitment to get the job done.

Lastly, we remind the Democratic Republic of Congo of its legal obligation to provide annual updates through Article 7 transparency reporting, which the DRC has not done since 2019.

Thank you.