Comments and Expectations
Mine Clearance Deadline Extension Requests Submitted in 2012

12th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
December 2012

ANGOLA
Extension requested: until 31 December 2017 (5 years)

Key comments on the request:

- The request lacks clarity in both what has been achieved to date as well as detailed plans and quantifiable targets for the extension period.
- The resource mobilization plan beyond 2013 is unclear, as are Angola’s planned national contributions to mine action. Angola wrote to the Analysing Group that a “fundraising concept paper” is being discussed. Information on that resource mobilization strategy should be shared with States Parties as soon as possible.
- Five years appears to be an unnecessarily long period of time for an interim request intended primarily to get a better estimate of contamination. Angola should request and be granted a three-year extension.

Expectations for the future
As Angola’s extension request lacks detailed plans and quantifiable targets in all areas of activities for the extension period, as well as information on resource mobilization, Angola should provide such details in upcoming opportunities to report, including at the 12MSP, in its next Article 7 report and at the 2013 intersessional meetings. Once such benchmarks are established, Angola should commit to reporting on progress in reaching them during the extension period. Missing information includes:

- Target dates for updating the database and correcting internal discrepancies.
- A work plan by year and operator for the non-technical survey. The survey started in 2011 and was supposed to take two years, so Angola should soon be able to report on its findings.
- Operational plans, benchmarks and annual targets for the mapping, certification and confirmation project, including an assessment of why this project cannot begin sooner.
- Expected national contributions to mine action during the extension period, as well as a plan for resource mobilization from international donors after 2013.

As a clear picture of the remaining contamination in Angola is still lacking, it is positive that Angola is requesting an interim period to get a better estimate of contamination and to sort out database issues. The request brings to light Angola’s past inability to collect and manage data properly, so the ICBL urges Angola to take the necessary management and policy changes to ensure the work on the database will resolve data quality issues for the duration of the mine action program. It also seems feasible for much of the work outlined in the request – such as the non-technical survey and the mapping project, to be pursued concurrently instead of consecutively, as currently seems to be planned.

Angola has allocated significant national funding to mine action and is also one of the largest recipients of international mine action funding. But foreign assistance is apparently declining based on an assessment of Angola’s own capacity to fund mine action. Moreover, it appears that a high percentage of Angola’s contributions go to demining land for infrastructure projects which
sometimes takes place without prior evidence of mine contamination, meaning that the funds are not contributing to fulfilling its Article 5 goals. **Angola should continue to allocate significant national funding to its mine action program**, targeting funding for activities that contribute to the completion of Article 5 obligations.

In response to a question by the Analysing Group, Angola stated that it planned to allocate $258 million to national demining organizations. Yet according to the extension request, this funding would again go to verifying vast areas that do not necessarily have prior evidence of mine contamination. Instead, Angola should ensure that such funds go towards fulfilling its obligations under Article 5 in the most expeditious and efficient manner, including by funding the international NGOs to carry out survey and clearance.

Overall, given the request’s lack of solid support for a 5-year extension, **the ICBL believes Angola should only request and be granted a three-year extension.**

**AFGHANISTAN**

**Extension requested:** until 1 March 2023 (10 years)

**Key comments on the request:**

- Afghanistan’s extension request can be a model for other states: it was developed in consultation with mine action operators, presents a comprehensive analysis of the efforts to date and the remaining mine and ERW problem, and presents a clear and realistic plan to clear known contamination within 10 years.
- There remain many uncertainties for the plan to be carried out: violent conflict and political uncertainty, a decline in international funding, and continuing discoveries of additional mine and ERW hazards.
- If circumstances are favorable, it is possible for the clearance to be finished in less than the requested 10 years. On the other hand, the request acknowledges a worst case scenario “of civil war that renders the whole program unfeasible.”

**Expectations for the future**

In addition to the challenges noted above, plans for transition to national ownership set out in the extension request inject further uncertainty into prospects for completion given the absence in the past of any clear desire or readiness on the part of the government of Afghanistan to take ownership. **The ICBL calls on the government to take effective ownership of mine action.** In addition, **donor states need to continue to fund MACCA’s essential coordination role in addition to clearance itself.**

As with any request for a long extension, States Parties should closely monitor progress to see that the state is meeting its annual objectives. The need for oversight is especially critical in Afghanistan given the scale of its political, security and funding challenges. The ICBL therefore recommends that **Afghanistan regularly report on progress against the specific benchmarks laid out in the request. Afghanistan should also commit to submit revised plans to States Parties** as appropriate during the extension period, such as after the planned national survey is finished and assessed, or if the security or funding situation changes significantly in the coming years.

While Afghanistan’s annual targets refer to leaving areas “impact free,” it is important that in practice Afghanistan ensures full compliance with Article 5, meaning the destruction of all
antipersonnel mines in mined areas, not just eliminating the impact on communities. Afghanistan should do all it can to fulfill the goal it set out for itself on page 8 of its extension request of finishing Article 5 obligations “within a shorter timeframe” if the funding situation and other circumstances are favorable.

**CYPRUS**

**Extension requested: until 1 July 2016 (3 years)**

*Key comments on the request:*

- Under Article 5, any State Party that will still have by its deadline mined areas in territory over which it asserts jurisdiction but that it does not control should apply for an extension, given that the wording in Article 5 is “jurisdiction or control.”
- It is positive that the Republic of Cyprus has undertaken to complete clearance of all areas under its effective control by its Article 5 deadline of 1 July 2013.
- Cyprus’ request for a short extension is in line with Article 5’s requirement to complete clearance as soon as possible.

*Expectations for the future*

According to the request, at least 20 minefields in the north of the island are not yet to be cleared of antipersonnel mines, but will need to be cleared before Cyprus can declare completion under the terms of Article 5. Parts of some of those minefields fall in the buffer zone in the area west of Nicosia, but there may still also be mined areas north of Nicosia. The UN Security Council, most recently in December 2011, has called on both sides to facilitate clearance of all remaining mined areas on the island. The UN has previously expressed a willingness to conduct clearance of the remaining mined areas, should it be given access to them by Turkish Forces. *All concerned parties should make a maximum effort to ensure the entire island is cleared within the extension period.*

**ZIMBABWE**

**Extension requested: until 1 January 2015 (2 years)**

*Key comments on the request:*

- Although it is regrettable that Zimbabwe has not been able to make much progress during its first two Article 5 extensions, it is generally positive that Zimbabwe keeps asking for short amounts of time to clarify the extent of current contamination.
- Given the good progress Zimbabwe has made in working with international partners, this should be the last interim request Zimbabwe needs to make.
- It is still not clear whether sufficient resources have been allocated for the planned work to be completed during the extension period.

---

1 In Resolution 2026 of 14 December 2011, the Security Council noted ‘with regret that the sides are withholding access to the remaining minefields in the buffer zone, and that demining in Cyprus has ceased as a result’, further noted ‘the continued danger posed by mines in Cyprus’, and urged ‘rapid agreement on facilitating the recommencement of demining operations and clearance of the remaining minefields.’ The Council called on ‘both sides to allow access to deminers and to facilitate the removal of the remaining mines in Cyprus within the buffer zone’, and urged ‘both sides to extend demining operations outside the buffer zone.’
Expectations for the future
Zimbabwe is seeking a third interim extension period in order to finally develop a solid understanding of its remaining mine contamination. *The ICBL hopes and expects that this will be the last interim extension that Zimbabwe will need to request* given that it is now partnering with the HALO Trust, the ICRC, and Norwegian People’s Aid on training, equipment, and survey. If the work can be carried out according to the plan in the extension request, *Zimbabwe will be in a position to present a detailed plan to complete clearance after this extension period.*

At the same time, it is critical for the success of the request that *sufficient international support is available for these organizations’ to work in Zimbabwe*, and that *Zimbabwe facilitates all necessary administrative measures in an expedient manner to ensure the international partnerships are successful*. More stability in management of the Zimbabwe Mine Action Center would also benefit the mine action program.

It is important that *Zimbabwe prioritize survey and clearance in the mined areas with particularly high impact on the civilian population*. It should also *make a greater effort to exclude civilians from the mined areas, conduct mine risk education, and collect data on landmine victims*.

*Collaboration with Mozambique will be essential* for completing clearance along the border, especially in areas where the border is not delineated or demarcated. Such cooperation, already signaled as a priority by both states, could serve as a model for other states in similar situations.