

Comments on Sudan's extension request

Intersessional Meetings of the Mine Ban Treaty 7-8 June 2018

This is Sudan's second extension request, and is for a period of four years until 1 April 2023. The request is well-designed, it addresses all required points, presents quite coherent data, and is overall of good quality. Our main concern would be the major gap in funding for the extended period, and, to a much lesser extent, the apparent lack of clarity on operations in West Kordofan.

Among the positive points:

- Sudan has a good understanding of the extent of contamination in areas that are accessible to mine action operators, 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/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 and is currently updating its resource mobilization strategy. Sudan has made national contributions to the mine action programme, and this is expected to continue.

The most significant challenge is the inaccessibility of most contaminated areas due to ongoing insecurity in parts of South Kordofan and Blue Nile provinces. We welcome the fact that plans have been prepared to tackle the problem in the high threat areas, once conditions permit. Additional survey will be required, which is expected to identify new contamination that may require further time and resources than planned for in the extension request. We welcome Sudan's intention to keep States Parties informed annually about changes in access and progress in survey implementation. We also wish to ask if it would be possible to initiate cross-line mine action, as has previously happened, before a Comprehensive Peace Agreement is signed.

Among the points that will require updates or additional information:

The 2019-2023 plan in Table 8 foresees that a high percentage (some 90%) of suspected hazardous area will be released by survey. This percentage is higher than any outputs in 2012-2016 (averaging roughly 74% released by survey over the period.) We welcome clarifications on how this land release projection was made.

There are discrepancies in cancellation projections between Table 26 and Table 8 that require clarification.

It is positive to read that Sudan would like to welcome more international operators to work in Sudan once more. It would be useful to know more about what measures will be taken to facilitate their reentry to Sudan, and to enable them to operate effectively. The extension request states that Sudan needs technical and logistical support, so Sudan could provide more details about how specifically international organisations could contribute to this.

Activities in Western Kordofan are described in four different manners: they will take place fully in 2018 according to Table 9; in 2019 according to Annex 3; in 2019-2021 according to Table 7; or they “will wait” according to page 58. This requires clarification. In addition, Sudan is invited to provide information on what coordination, if any, is taking place with UNISFA towards clearance activities in Abyei.

Sudan has hosted events for donors in-country in 2016 and 2017, and at the intersessional meetings in 2017. Sudan expects to continue to provide national funding during the extended period, contributing between 11% and 47% of annual costs. At the intersessional meeting, Sudan should provide information on what progress has been made in filling the funding gap for 2018 and beyond, and whether clearance targets are on track for 2018. We also welcome more information on whether funding from the government is directed to operations or administration.

Sudan is in the process of reviewing its mine action strategy and should make it publicly available as soon as possible, ideally before the next Meeting of States Parties.