

Statement on Clearance / Article 5 Implementation

Madam Chair,

As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, let me congratulate the Chilean Presidency for the organization of the Intersessional Meeting, and let me assure you of my delegation's full support to our deliberations and work today and tomorrow. Let me also seize the opportunity to congratulate Mr. Juan Carlos Ruan on his assumption of the function as Director of the ISU.

Madam Chair,

Switzerland would also like to thank the Committee on Article 5 Implementation for preliminary observations. The article 5 committee was established in Maputo to secure a more sustained follow-up to clearance efforts and therefore greater results under the convention. We value the work of this committee and thank its members for all its efforts. The committee is dependent for its work on the concomitant efforts of all concerned States Parties. As indicated in paragraphs 13 and 14 of the preliminary report, 14 out of 32 States with article 5 obligations have provided the Article 5 committee with information in 2016. In this context, we would like to encourage **all** affected States to provide the Article 5 committee with all the required information so that it can fulfil its function as effectively as possible.

Let me continue by congratulating Ecuador for being on a clear path to completing its Article 5 obligation by its extended deadline next year, and thank Algeria's for its encouraging report on progress in clearing mined areas. The apparently nearing completion of clearance in Algeria and Ecuador within the extended timeframe once requested is an important signal that the provisions of this Convention can be implemented, even if substantial challenges exist.

Likewise, Switzerland would also like to thank Niger, Peru for their presentation of the respective extension requests. And finally, we would like to express our thanks and appreciation for the numerous updates from affected States we have just heard.

Madam Chair,

Switzerland has been actively engaged not only in contributing to the drafting of the Maputo Action Plan, but also in deliberations on clearance in the framework of other international disarmament instruments relevant for mine action. Based on such deliberations as well as on our own experience, we are of the view that within the past two decades, the mine action community has made enormous progress in the development and application of clearance methodologies. This progress is certainly also increasingly reflected in Article 5 extension requests.

However, in the light of the relatively high number of extensions granted within the past years, we believe it is important to use the opportunity of the Intersessional Meetings to continuously exchange on progress, challenges and needs with regards to clearance. Such exchange is not only vital for understanding the challenges that still need to be addressed, but also for identifying the interdependencies between matters related to Article 5 and other aspects we discuss today and tomorrow; here I would like to mention reporting obligations under Article 7 or, of course, progress and challenges to cooperation and assistance.

Madam Chair,

Last but not least, let me share some reflections on a rather technical level: As also Action #8 of the Maputo Action Plan indicates, it is of vital importance to quantify and qualify the remaining challenges. Once this information is available, it enables a much more precise allocation of resources; clearance operations become more efficient and more effective. The annual reports to be submitted under Article 7 are an ideal tool to communicate this information, for the

benefit of the affected population, of the affected State and its authorities, as well as for the benefit of potential donors. We therefore encourage affected States and their relevant authorities to particularly apply the well-developed technical and non-technical survey methodologies and to make use of the land release methodology, in line with the International Mine Action Standards.

Thank you.