



MINE BAN CONVENTION
13th Meeting of State Parties
Agenda 9: Article 5 Extension requests
Statement by Australia

2 December 2013

Statement delivered by Ms Anne Giles.

Mr President

As Australia is taking the floor for the first time, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as President of this meeting and to offer you our full support. We also wish to thank the outgoing President, H.E. Ambassador Kovacic of Slovenia, for his leadership over the past year, and for this detailed analysis of the extension requests.

Mozambique

Australia supports Mozambique's request for a 10 month extension of its clearance deadline under Article 5.

We acknowledge the difficulties experienced by Mozambique in its demining activities and look forward to a progress report during the extension period.

We look forward to updates from Mozambique in early 2014, with respect to progress on the projected reduction of mined areas, particularly, as noted by the analysing group, meeting this deadline is subject to both the conclusion of a cooperation agreement with Zimbabwe, and to the ability to demine throughout the calendar year 2014.

Australia is pleased to be supporting Mozambique's efforts to clear all known landmines by the end of 2014 and recognizes the considerable efforts that Mozambique and its implementing partners have made in working towards this objective.

Niger

Australia thanks Niger for its request for extension to its clearance deadline under Article 5 for previously unknown mined areas.

We encourage Niger to provide detailed reporting, to States Parties, of progress made on activities listed for 2014-15; that is, in outcomes of survey efforts, and how additional clarity obtained may change Niger's understanding of the remaining implementation challenge. We would also welcome reporting on changes in the security situation and how these changes may affect the implementation process.

Australia is encouraged by the fact that the Government of Niger intends to allocate national funding to support in part to the implementation of its mine action work plan to ensure it is in full compliance with Article 5 of the Convention.

We look forward to further reporting on these details from Niger at future meetings, including at the Review Conference in 2014.

Serbia

Australia thanks Serbia for its request for extension to its clearance deadline under Article 5.

It is unfortunate to hear that Serbia's demining activity has experienced a number of challenges. Australia supports a further extension period for Serbia and urges Serbia to prioritise risk areas and suspected areas that remain to be surveyed, including by demonstrating national ownership through funding part of its demining costs.

We look forward to further information from Serbia with respect to an updated work plan on all survey activities are completed, and to regular updates on demining activities and areas that remain to be cleared.

Sudan

Australia thanks Sudan for its request for extension of its clearance deadline under Article 5.

We welcome the considerable progress made by Sudan in implementing Article 5 of the Convention. We acknowledge that the security situation in Sudan has prevented surveys of hazardous areas being completed, and that there are areas that still require demining and surveys. We encourage Sudan to evaluate regularly and update its national mine action plan during the extension period.

We look forward to updates from Sudan, with respect to qualified reporting on outcomes of survey efforts, progress in implementation and any changes in the security situation.

Turkey

Australia thanks Turkey for its request for extension of its clearance deadline under Article 5.

Australia recognizes that Turkey has a large mine-affected area within its border that will still require intensive demining. We do recognize that the current conflict in Syria and consequent security and humanitarian challenges have impeded progress. Nevertheless, we encourage Turkey to progress with its demining activities, particularly areas where civilian casualties are most likely to occur and to the benefit of local populations. We encourage Turkey to advance structural and administrative processes required to begin demining activities.

Australia welcomes the Turkish Government's renewed commitment through its extension request to carry out mine clearance operations and comply with its obligations by 1 March 2022.