

13th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
ICBL Comments on Article 5
4 and 5 December 2013



First, we would like to warmly congratulate Bhutan, Hungary, and Venezuela on their declarations of completion of clearance, and on entering the proud body of states that have finished this important treaty obligation. This brings us three states closer to our collective goal of full implementation of Article 5, and we thank you for your efforts to this end. We also welcome the news that Germany has finished verifying that there were in fact no antipersonnel mines in the area they identified as suspected in 2011, and we thank Germany for its transparency during the process.

Before turning to specific comments on the presentations, the ICBL would like to make four short comments in lieu of longer planned statement on clearance. First, we note that too many States Parties with Article 5 obligations still do not have clear information of the actual extent of their mine problem, information that is essential for rational planning and resource management, as well as true progress in mine clearance.

Second, too many states are behind their own clearance schedules, and have not updated their plans to address how they will make up for lost time.

Third, stronger national leadership and the proactive use of the latest methodologies for releasing land are both urgently needed in a number of states. Those states falling farthest behind in their plans are those doing the poorest in these two areas. These are messages we have given before, and we will continue to insist on them until we see the level of political commitment mine action requires, and until no more states are clearing areas where there is no reliable evidence of mines.

Finally, we would like to raise the problem of the quality of reporting. In ISC statements, Article 7 reports, and again this week, we are no longer seeing the type of clear, comprehensive reporting we saw when states were motivated by the need to request an extension. What we need to hear is simple, and yet all too rarely heard: the amount of land released during the reporting period, broken down by method of release, progress in meeting annual benchmarks laid out in clearance plans, and the remaining extent of contamination. It seems critical that at the 3rd Review Conference, States Parties address this situation and find a way that can effectively motivate affected states to report well again.

Turning now to comments on a few of the statements.

Nous remercions la **République démocratique du Congo** pour sa présentation. Nous prenons note du fait qu'il reste un certain nombre de zones non-enquêtées et que le calendrier de

dépôt des demandes de prorogation est un peu particulier cette année. Nous remercions par avance la RDC de rendre publics les résultats d'enquête dès que possible en début d'année prochaine. Les données d'enquête devraient vous permettre de clarifier la situation de base en ce qui concerne la contamination, ce qui sera un pas important du programme de lutte anti-mines. Nous espérons que la prochaine période de prorogation sera caractérisée par une collaboration accrue entre UNMACC et le CCLAM.

We thank **Zimbabwe** for its presentation. We would like to encourage Zimbabwe to ensure the administrative frame of work for clearance operators is supportive of efficient activities. This could enable a precious time gain.

Nous remercions le **Sénégal** et toutes les parties prenantes, pour leurs efforts déployés afin de dialoguer avec le MFDC afin de permettre la poursuite des activités de déminage humanitaire. Nous saluons la reprise des opérations. Si cela signifie que toutes les zones sont maintenant accessibles, c'est une excellente nouvelle et nous aimerions savoir quel impact cela aura sur le respect de la date butoir. Si malgré la reprise des zones demeurent inaccessibles pour des raisons de sécurité, nous prions instamment le Sénégal de faire tout en son pouvoir pour dépolluer toutes les zones actuellement accessibles. À notre connaissance il existe plusieurs de ces zones où des travaux de dépollution ne sont pas actuellement en cours. Le Sénégal devrait faire le meilleur usage possible des méthodes de remise à disposition des terres, et faire en sorte que seules les zones confirmées dangereuses soient dépolluées, ce qui ne semble pas toujours être le cas. En outre, nous nous demandons si le Sénégal compte présenter un nouveau plan d'action expliquant comment la date butoir de 2016 sera respectée.

We thank **Ecuador** for reporting so clearly on past accomplishments, the scale of the remaining challenge, the plan of action and the feasibility of reaching your deadline. Also, we would like to highlight the remarkable example of bi-national cooperation between Peru and Ecuador.

We urge **Angola** to make the best possible use of land release methodologies and to make sure INAD and CNIDAH work together to this end. It is crucial that clearance assets be deployed only in zones where contamination is confirmed.

On **Thailand**, despite increases in productivity, we're afraid the current productivity rate still puts Thailand far behind its projected annual achievements. So we would like call again on Thailand to present states with an updated plan taking into account the differences over the past years with planned targets. We would also like to hear more about how it is implementing land releases procedures to increase productivity even further and focus on truly contaminated areas. We urge TMAC to listen to the advice from technical experts and fully take on board the latest land release methodologies.

Bosnia-Herzegovina is one of the states falling far behind its plans. As it noted today, over the past 4 years, it has only achieved 40% of its mine action strategy targets. According to our data, this means that Bosnia is over 250km² behind in the release of land relative to the targets in its plan. We would like to know how Bosnia-Herzegovina plans to close this significant gap. Your report mentioned today that you have reviewed your Mine Action Strategy, but we would like to know if this has resulted in a revised plan that better match the real situation on the ground, and if so, encourage you to share it with States Parties by Third Review Conference. We hope it includes a plan for more proactive resource mobilization from local, national and international sources, which we understand has been a cause of slower than planned progress.

We would also like to encourage Bosnia-Herzegovina to review its land release methodology to ensure it is in line with the latest methodologies. This could play an important part in Bosnia-Herzegovina's ability to meet its strategic plan.

Finally, we understand that there have been long delays in creating a new mine action law to address shortcomings in the existing one. We hope that the new law can be drafted with the input of all relevant stakeholders and put into place as soon as possible.

We thank the **United Kingdom** for the news that another five mined areas were cleared, more funding was provided, and that a study was done that clarifies the remaining work to be done. It seems then that the United Kingdom would now be in a position to provide States Parties with the long awaited plan for the extension period, including annual projected achievements and a budget. We hope such a plan could be provided by the 3rd Review Conference.

As **Tajikistan** noted today, it has recently discovered an additional 110 mined areas. We urge Tajikistan to adopt a land release policy to ensure that it will still be possible to complete its Article 5 obligations by their extended deadline. We understand at present that full clearance resources are still being deployed in areas without sufficient evidence of mine contamination, which is clearly a waste of time and money. We also urge Tajikistan to invest greater political and financial resources in making sure progress is made in a more expedient manner.

Thank you.