



Note No. 14839-DRVS / CENDESMI

Quito, November 26, 2016

Her Excellency
Patricia O'Brian
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations in Geneva
Chair of the Art. 5 Committee.

After the signing of the Brasilia Peace Agreement on October 28 of 1998, which ended a bicentennial territorial dispute between Ecuador and Peru, my country began the process of humanitarian demining in the border areas with that country.

Ecuador signed the Ottawa Convention on the "Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction", on the 4th of December of 1997, ratified it on the 29th of April of 1999 and put it into force on the 1st of October of 1999.

The humanitarian demining process in Ecuador until 2012 was made possible thanks to the commitment and support of the Ecuadorian state as well as important contributions made since its beginning by several donor countries such as Canada, the United States, Japan, Italy and Norway, among others.

Ecuador undertakes the humanitarian demining process starting in 2012 with the project "Release of Lands Polluted by Land Mines known until this moment on the common terrestrial border of Ecuador - Peru".

In full compliance with the obligations of the Convention, to this date, Ecuador has managed to liberate 132 areas through the clearance of a total of 493,831.38 square meters. These operations culminated, until December 2015, with the destruction of 10,866 antipersonnel mines, 74 anti-tank mines and 24 UXO's.

Likewise, according to the records, the technical study and clearing in the Provinces of Zamora Chinchipe and Morona Santiago (Km2 of Tiwintza) is about to conclude, pending the destruction of 5,478 antipersonnel mines in an area of 137,653 square meters.

It is still pending the process of delivering liberated lands to the competent authorities of all the provinces of the national territory is not yet complete.

I must point out that Ecuador has been promoting and maintaining in a sustained and continuous manner, the humanitarian demining process since the year 2000, which

reflects the seriousness and responsibility with which my country has assumed its international commitments in this area.

Nevertheless, on April 16, 2016, an Earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 affected the national territory in particular the Provinces of Esmeraldas and Manabí. The earthquake left 673 dead, 9 missing people, 6,274 injured, 28,775 people living in shelters and 6,998 buildings destroyed. Losses are calculated in about 1% of the GDP.

For this reason a national emergency and mobilization was declared, including that of the Armed forces that turned to the task of rescue and reconstruction of the affected areas. Additionally it was necessary to arrange a redistribution of resources for this absolutely unforeseen and fortuitous situation.

All this determined the suspension of the planning and execution of Humanitarian Demining operations.

Additionally, due to the physical characteristics of the land and to the existing climate conditions in the clearing areas, Ecuador is unable to complete the whole eradication process of anti-personnel mines in its territory, until October 1, 2017, the deadline established in the Convention.

For these reasons, and in exercise of the faculty provided for in Article 5 of the Ottawa Convention on the "Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction", in my capacity as Chairman of the National Humanitarian Demining Center of Ecuador, National Authority in this matter, I am honored to request the States Parties to the Convention to grant to the Republic of Ecuador, an extension until December 31, 2017. In this way, Ecuador would be in a position to submit a request for an extension as set in Article 5 before March 31 2017, to be considered at the XVI Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention, and thus avoid being in a situation of non-compliance.

As I urge the States Parties to the Convention to favorably consider the request for the extension for my country, I am pleased to express that Ecuador is ready to submit the information that might be required and to work along with the Implementation Support Unit –ISU- for the full fulfilment of its obligations.

In anticipating my special thanks, I avail myself of the opportunity to renew the sentiments of my highest and most distinguished consideration.

Efraín Baus Palacios,
**Director of Neighborhood Relations and Sovereignty for the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility and
President of the National Humanitarian Demining Center of Ecuador**