

Decisions on the request submitted by Iraq for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention

21 December 2017

- i. The Meeting assessed the request submitted by Iraq for an extension of Iraq's deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in mined areas in accordance with article 5.1, agreeing unanimously to grant the request for an extension until 1 February 2028.
- ii. In granting the request, the Meeting noted that even with a consistent and sizeable effort having been undertaken by Iraq going back even before entry into force of the Convention, Iraq faces a significant remaining contamination challenge in order to fulfil its obligations under Article 5.
- iii. The Meeting, in recalling that the implementation of Iraq's national demining plan may be affected by changing circumstances, the level of resources obtained and the amount of external and internal capacity involved in survey and clearance operations, the Meeting requested that Iraq submit to the Fourth Review Conference in 2019, an updated work plan for the remaining period covered by the extension request and every two years following this. The Meeting requested that this work plan contain an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, annual projections of which areas and area that would be dealt with each year during the remaining period covered by the request and a revised detailed updated budget.
- iv. The Committee further noted that, given the changing circumstance in Iraq, the Convention would benefit from Iraq submitting updated work plans to the Committee every two years.
- v. The Meeting, in recalling that Iraq had indicated that it was in the process of preparing a plan for non-technical survey operations and that emergency non-technical survey operations were ongoing noted that the Convention could benefit from Iraq submitting to the States Parties, by 30 April 2018, plans for NTS in the different areas of the country including NTS plans for areas liberated from ISIS.
- vi. In granting the request, the Meeting noted the importance of Iraq ensuring that the most relevant land-release standards, policies and methodologies, in line with IMAS, are in place and applied for the full and expedient implementation of this aspect of the Convention. The Meeting further encouraged Iraq to continue seeking improved land release and certification techniques which could lead to Iraq fulfilling its obligations in a shorter time frame. The Meeting noted that doing so could benefit Iraq in ensuring that the humanitarian, social and economic impacts outlined by Iraq in its request are addressed as quickly as possible. The Meeting further noted the importance of Iraq continuing to report on its progress in a manner consistent with IMAS by providing information disaggregated by cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey and cleared.

- vii. The Meeting noted that, given the importance of external support to ensure timely implementation, Iraq could benefit from developing a resource mobilisation strategy, in part by providing additional clarity regarding estimated costs for implementation. The Meeting further noted that given the importance of external support to ensure timely implementation, Iraq could benefit from clarifying the costs that Iraq's State budget would cover as part of the overall costs of implementation. The Meeting noted that it would be useful if Iraq could further break down the costs of operation to offer more clarity on the reasons for the significant difference in costs of implementation.

- viii. The Meeting noted that the plan is ambitious, and that success is contingent upon increased funding, the maintenance of security, and changes in the political climate to enable access to those hazardous areas near international borders. In this regard, the Meeting noted that the States Parties would benefit from Iraq reporting annually, by 30 April, to the States Parties on the following:
 - a. Progress made relative to the commitments contained in Iraq's two-year work plan during the extension period;
 - b. Efforts by the DMA to prepare a plan for NTS operations and milestones to be achieved as well as the milestones to be achieved in the plans that the request indicates have been prepared for NTS of the areas liberated from ISIS groups;
 - c. Geographically specific information on the implementation of survey plans, locations and the results of these efforts and how additional clarity obtained may change Iraq's understanding of the remaining implementation challenge;
 - d. Changes in the security situation and how these changes positively or negatively affect implementation;
 - e. Efforts to resolve political issues which prevent the carrying out of mine action activities in border areas of Iraq;
 - f. Resource mobilisation efforts and external financing received and resources made available by the government of Iraq to support implementation efforts, including through efforts to facilitate operations of international demining organisations and expanding of indigenous capacities, and the results of these efforts.

- ix. The Meeting noted the importance, in addition to Iraq reporting to the States Parties as noted above, of keeping the States Parties regularly apprised of other pertinent developments regarding its implementation of Article 5 during the period covered by the request and other commitments made in the request at intersessional meetings, Meeting of the States Parties and Review Conferences as well as through Article 7 reports using the Guide for Reporting.