
**Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention
on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,
Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel
Mines and on Their Destruction**

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**Informal presentation of requests submitted under
article 5 and of the analysis of these requests**

**Analysis of the request submitted by Mauritania for an
extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of
anti-personnel mines in accordance with article 5 of the
Convention**

**Submitted by the President of the Second Review Conference on behalf
of the States Parties mandated to analyse requests for extensions**

1. Mauritania ratified the Convention on 21 July 2000. The Convention entered into force for Mauritania on 1 January 2001. In its initial transparency report submitted on 20 June 2001, Mauritania reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Mauritania is obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 January 2011. Mauritania, believing that it will be unable to do so by that date, submitted on 10 April 2010 to the President of the Second Review Conference, a request for an extension of its deadline. On 18 May 2010, the President of the Second Review Conference wrote to Mauritania to request additional information. Mauritania provided a response on 14 June 2010 and subsequently, on 6 September 2010, Mauritania submitted to the President of the Second Review Conference a revised request for extension incorporating additional information provided in response to the President's questions. Mauritania's request is for 5 years, until 1 January 2016.

2. The request indicates that an initial Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) carried out in 2006, and certified by the United Nations in 2007, identified 30 communities suspected of being mine affected with these communities comprising a total area of 35,725,000 square meters. The States Parties mandated to analyse requests submitted under Article 5 of the Convention (hereafter referred to as the "analysing group") noted that simply locating communities suspected of being mine affected and amassing the combined area of these communities did not provide Mauritania with a benchmark to use in measuring progress and did little to inform Mauritania of the locations where implementation would need to occur.

3. The request further indicates that during the preparation of the extension request, the Kingdom of Morocco provided to Mauritania registries for four mined areas located on Mauritania's border with Western Sahara with these four areas comprising

52,000,000 square meters. The request also indicates that these areas have been addressed prior to the entry into force of the Convention having employed military standards and that the plan to address these areas with mechanical assets is solely for verification purposes and should not take a long time.

4. The request indicates that the information gathered by the LIS did not provide detailed knowledge concerning the precise location and perimeter of the affected areas. The President of the Second Review Conference wrote to Mauritania to request additional information on the methodology employed in carrying out the LIS. Mauritania responded by (a) indicating that the LIS carried out in Mauritania was based on the 10 protocols established by the Survey Action Centre, who certified the LIS in 2007, and (b) annexing the description of the methodology to its response. The request further indicates that the LIS overestimated the extent of contamination as evidenced by technical surveys carried out up to 2009 that confirmed only a low level of contamination in 5 of 14 suspected sites surveyed.

5. The request indicates that Mauritania created the National Humanitarian Demining Programme for Development (PNDHD) in 2006 and that prior to that the rate of clearance was very slow. The President of the Second Review Conference requested additional information on the existing structure, clearance methodology and standards employed for the clearance of mines during the period of 2001-2006, the reason for the slow progress during this time frame, the factors that allowed improvement in efficiency in 2006 and asked if a differentiation could be made between those areas cleared during this period and those cleared following the establishment of the PNDHD. Mauritania responded by indicating that demining during the period of 2001-2006 was carried out in a military structure within the Ministry of Defence and that the structure was similar to other mine action structures, managed the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) and carried out operation according to International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) utilizing solely manual detection as well as excavation. Mauritania indicated that the main issue that made the process slow was the difficulties in mobilizing resources given that donors did not want to finance an institution dependent on the Department of Defence.

6. The request indicates that to date a total surface area of 20,805,260 square metres has been treated in 14 communities with the aid of demining operations, technical studies, clearance, and by the application of Mauritania's land release policy. As well, other areas totalling approximately 22 million square metres containing or suspected to contain explosive remnants of war other than anti-personnel mines were also treated. In total, 7,259 anti-personnel mines, 316 anti-vehicle mines and 6,160 other explosive remnants of war were destroyed. The analysing group noted that Mauritania had acted in a manner consistent with commitments the States Parties had made through the adoption of the Cartagena Action Plan by providing information disaggregated by release through clearance, technical survey and non-technical survey.

7. The request indicates that as of 30 March 2010, 17 of the communities identified by the LIS and the four areas covered by the information provided to Mauritania by Morocco remained to be treated covering a total surface area of 64,819,740 square metres. The analysing group noted that this included over 12 million square metres identified by the LIS, which Mauritania itself remarked did not locate or provide precise perimeters of mined areas.

8. The request indicates that there have been significant socio-economic gains made since entry into force as a result of Article 5 implementation. The request indicates that apart from a significant reduction in mine accidents, benefits have included the opening of roads (trans-African road: linking Morocco and Mauritania which is an important new infrastructure for trade and movement of people throughout the region), water conveyance (especially that of Nouadhibou, economic capital of Mauritania), the development of

tourism, the free movement of nomads to reach grazing land, expansion of mining research and the development of plans to extend the city of Nouadhibou. The request further indicates that a number of rural communities no longer have to live with the stress of mines which barred everyday activities such as livestock grazing and gravel extraction.

9. As noted, Mauritania's request is for 5 years (until 1 January 2016) on the basis that the surface area that will actually need to be treated likely will be much smaller than the LIS estimates, that there will be an increase in the number of active deminers, and that two demining machines will be introduced. The request indicates the following as risk factors: (a) that an inadequate amount of resources would be mobilised; (b) that results of operations would fall short of what has been planned; and (c) that there would be a reduction in the number of deminers.

10. The request indicates the following as impeding circumstances: (a) that between entry into force and 2006 the rate of mine clearance was very slow; (b) that a preoccupation with manual techniques had resulted in a low return; (c) that climatic and environmental factors such as high temperatures and the movement of sand dunes affect demining; (d) that insufficient funding has been obtained; and (e) that to date demining machines have not yet been acquired. The analysing group noted that the delay in proceeding more rapidly with implementation as possible after entry into force hampered Mauritania in fulfilling its obligations by its deadline.

11. The request provides annual projections of the number of areas and the total area to be released each year between 2010/2011 and 2015, with these projections broken down according to locality, impact and methods to be used. Seven (7) areas with a total of 9,315,000 square meters will be addressed in the period of 2010 to 2011, six (6) areas with a total of 11,696,000 square meters will be addressed in 2012, four (4) areas with a total of 13,808,740 square meters will be addressed in 2013, a total of 15,000,000 square meters will be addressed in 2014 and the remaining four (4) areas will be addressed in 2015 with the clearance of 15,000,000. The request indicates that all areas related to the LIS will have been dealt with by the end of 2012 and all areas related to the information provided to Mauritania by Morocco will have been dealt with by the end of 2015.

12. The request indicates that the current capacity for mine clearance is 120 deminers which will decrease after the retirement this year of 60 deminers. The request also indicates that an additional 180 deminers will be trained in order to have a total of 240 deminers working in the field and that the training for 60 deminers is planned for the last quarter of 2010 and training for the additional 120 deminers is planned for the first quarter of 2011. The request further indicates that in addition to the manual mine clearance equipment the acquisition of two mechanical mine clearance assets is planned to address, in particular, the mined areas in Guemgoum which represent the largest surface areas to need addressing.

13. The request indicates that Mauritania has developed National Mine Action Standards which take their lead from IMAS adapted to the realities of Mauritania in terms of geography and equipment and that the mine clearance process includes the following steps: survey, survey resumption, technical survey, mine clearance, quality control, mapmaking and reporting. The request indicates that approved manual demining techniques include excavation and the use of mine detectors. The request further indicates that land initially suspected by local populations is also released through the use of non-technical means based on analysis of the information gathered during the LIS compared with analytical indicators in close collaboration with the beneficiaries. The land release policy has been annexed to the request.

14. The President of the Second Review Conference requested additional information on "survey resumption" and if this means that Mauritania is carrying out a more detailed survey in communities that were subjected to the LIS and if there are new surveys carried

out with the aim of reducing/releasing areas through non-technical survey. Mauritania answered by indicating that it believes that it is important to carry out additional non-technical surveys in the field to seek maximum information on the affected areas in order to reduce the suspected areas identified through the LIS, through non-technical means.

15. The request indicates that Mauritania projects that US\$16.5 million will be required for activities related to the implementation of article 5 during the period of 2010-2016. This includes US\$ 4.5 million for acquisition of transport and mine clearance equipment, US\$ 260,000 for training, US\$ 1.0 million for technical survey, US\$ 25,000 for the resumption of non-technical survey, US\$ 6.4 million for mine clearance, US\$ 20,000 for land release activities, US\$ 105,000 for quality control, and US\$ 4.2 million for personnel costs. The analysing group noted the relatively large amount budgeted for acquisition of transport and mine clearance equipment and the small amount budgeted for land release activities, particularly given the elaboration within the request of a land release policy.

16. The request indicates that Mauritania, since 2001, has invested its own resources on an annual basis into humanitarian demining through the provision of evacuation, maintenance of equipment and all costs associated with seconded personnel for mine clearance such as the basic salary of deminers and social security averaging approximately US\$ 519,444 per year. The request further indicates that Mauritania intends to invest US\$4.2 million during the extension period to cover the costs of deminers, with the remaining US\$12.3 million to be provided by sources other than Mauritania.

17. The analysing group noted that the most significant annual amount required from external sources – US\$ 5,140,000 – was during the first year of the requested extension period (2011) and that the receipt of it would probably be crucial for the implementation of Mauritania's plan as it would largely be used for the purchase of equipment. The analysing group further noted that annual requirements for external funding were significantly greater than Mauritania's experience to date.

18. The request indicates that Mauritania is carrying out advocacy efforts among its development partners to mobilise the necessary resources for clearance operations to be undertaken, notably with: Japan, Spain, United States, France, Canada, Italy, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Germany and the European Commission. The request indicates that Mauritania has contacted certain countries of the Gulf including Libya to support their mine clearance activities and that they anticipate a visit of experts from the Libyan demining foundation during the course of this year. The request indicates that Mauritania's plan foresees the increased involvement of international demining organisations. The request indicates that Norwegian People's Aid has carried out a field visit from 25 to 29 May 2010 and has met with relevant entities in Mauritania to study the possibility of collaboration, particularly in the region of Tiris Zemour. The request indicates that during 1–10 June 2010 a mission of 4 experts from Handicap International carried out a field visit and met with other relevant entities to examine the possibility of working in the area of Wilaya de Daklet Nouadhibou and that a draft project is currently being elaborated and will be finalised by August 2010.

19. The request indicates that demining work to date has resulted in significant humanitarian and socio-economic gains, particular in terms of access to water, the development of tourism, the free movement of nomads, the expansion of geological exploration and a significant reduction in mine victims. The analysing group noted that Mauritania had provided in its request data on mine victims disaggregated by age and sex in keeping with commitments the States Parties had made through the adoption of the Cartagena Action Plan. The request further indicates that, while great progress has been made in Mauritania, the human impact of mines is still dire in areas slated for clearance with a total of 225,000 people, of whom 70 percent are women and children, living in proximity to suspected hazardous areas. The request also indicates that these areas are often

in proximity to nomadic encampments and are favoured for camel grazing. As well, the request indicates that a number of economic activities are being hampered by the suspected hazardous areas including access to grazing land, access to water, mining research, urban development and access to the coastal areas for the development of traditional fishing activities and tourism. The analysing group noted that completion of article 5 implementation during the requested extension period has the potential of making further significant contributions to improving human safety in and the socio-economic development of Mauritania.

20. The request includes other relevant information that may be of use to the States Parties in assessing and considering the request including a detailed timeline for implementation, a table listing the size and location of each area of concern, a table listing progress to date according to specific areas, and an overview of the type and quantity of human resources required during each year of the requested extension period.

21. The analysing group noted that while progress in implementing article 5 was limited until 2006, Mauritania's efforts had improved considerably after that time with the establishment of Mauritania's National Humanitarian Demining Programme Development. The analysing group further noted that the plan presented by Mauritania is workable and ambitious, but subject to the acquisition of equipment and the receipt of funds at levels that greatly exceeding recent experience. In addition, the analysing group noted that given the importance of external support to ensure implementation, Mauritania's resource mobilisation efforts could benefit from communicating in more detail its cost projections for acquisition of transport and mine clearance equipment and for land release.

22. The analysing group noted that the plan presented by Mauritania provides for the use of the full range of technical and non-technical means to release suspected hazardous areas in keeping with the recommendations adopted by the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties. In this regard, the analysing group noted the importance of Mauritania continuing to report on its progress in a manner consistent with commitments the States Parties had made through the adoption of the Cartagena Action Plan by providing information disaggregated by release through clearance, technical survey and non-technical survey.

23. The analysing group noted that the accounting of annual milestones of progress to be achieved, which Mauritania provided in its request, would greatly assist both Mauritania and all States Parties in assessing progress during the extension period. In this regard, the analysing group further noted that both could benefit if Mauritania provided updates relative to this accounting of expected progress at meetings of the Standing Committees, Meetings of the States Parties, and at the Third Review Conference.
