
**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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Item 9 of the provisional agenda

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

**Analysis of the request submitted by Eritrea 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 Tenth Meeting of the States Parties
on behalf of the States Parties mandated to analyse requests for
extensions**

1. Eritrea ratified the Convention on 27 August 2001. The Convention entered into force for Eritrea on 1 February 2002. In its initial transparency report submitted on 3 September 2003, Eritrea reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Eritrea is obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 February 2012. Eritrea, believing that it will be unable to do so by that date, submitted on 31 March 2011 to the President of the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties (10MSP), a request for an extension of its deadline. On 11 May 2011, the 10MSP President wrote to Eritrea to request additional information. Eritrea provided a response on 7 June 2011 and subsequently, on 11 August, Eritrea submitted to the President of the Tenth Meeting of States Parties a revised request. Eritrea's request is for 3 years (until 1 February 2015).

2. The request indicates that Eritrea's understanding of the original challenge was derived from a Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) carried out in 2002-2004, executed by the UNDP with technical support from Survey Action Centre and implemented by the Eritrean Solidarity and Co-operation Association (ESCA), identifying 914 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) measuring 129 square kilometres. The request indicates that of the 914 SHAs, 752 SHAs (affecting 411 communities) were identified as contaminated by anti-personnel mines, a mix of anti-personnel mines and anti-tank mines, or, a mix of anti-personnel mines, anti-tank mines, and unexploded ordnance. The request also indicates that the LIS covered all of Eritrea's territory except for 170 communities which were inaccessible to the LIS. The request indicates that, of these 170 areas, 140 were inaccessible due to difficult access and 30 were inaccessible for security reasons. In these 30 areas, given prior clearance activities, Eritrea does not expect to identify any significant number of mined areas and that these areas are currently under the jurisdiction but not under the control of

Eritrea. The request further indicates that the principal weakness of the LIS was the lack of detail concerning the SHAs, thus requiring a resurvey in order to better quantify and locate the remaining challenge in Eritrea.

3. The 10MSP President requested addition information concerning Eritrea's plan to survey the 170 areas, under Eritrea's control, that were inaccessible at the time of the LIS. Eritrea responded by indicating that these areas are included in the survey plans.

4. The request indicates that prior to the LIS a number of national and international organizations, coordinated by the United Nations Mission Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) Mine Action Coordination Centre (MACC), carried out surveys mostly in the Temporary Security Zone, an area 25 kilometres wide within Eritrea and about 1000 kilometres long along the border with Ethiopia. The request indicates that the data gathered contained overestimations, duplications, other complications, and that Eritrea still faces difficulties in sorting out the data provided by UNMEE MACC before its departure. The request further indicates that, as the LIS covered all communities included in these early surveys, the EDA has adopted the findings of the LIS as the best available reference concerning national contamination, notwithstanding the significant flaws of the LIS.

5. The 10MSP President requested addition information concerning the SHAs, including information on the 752 SHAs that were suspected to contain anti-personnel mines. Eritrea responded by indicating that the LIS findings provided only the total of 129 square kilometres for the 914 SHAs, and, that some of the records could not be matched up with real/actual locations due to a number of overlaps and complications in the records of the previous years. Eritrea reiterated that this is the reason why Eritrea is requesting an extension, to conduct in 2012-2015 a planned level two survey to attain a precise picture of the remaining contamination and to assess the necessary mine clearance period.

6. The request indicates that from the period of 2001-2010 a total of 79 locations have been treated with a total surface area of 54,755,011 square meters in 26 communities culminating in the destruction of 10,296 anti-personnel mines, 998 anti-tank mines and 69,401 unexploded ordnance. The request further indicates that this was achieved by a number of non-governmental organizations and commercial companies which were engaged in mine clearance in Eritrea (Eritrean Demining Agency, Danish Church Aid, Danish Demining Group, HALO Trust, RONCO/EDA, RONCO, Mine Awareness Trust, UNMEE Contingencies).

7. The 10MSP President asked Eritrea if any further non-technical or technical survey had taken place after the LIS to reduce the amount of suspected area and if the figures given for land "cleared" is actually land that has been released through survey. Eritrea responded by indicating that no regular technical survey was carried out after the LIS but that teams conducted "spot surveys" for certain marked areas before commencing clearance. Eritrea also indicated that when impacted areas are cleared they are released to the community according to the procedure of land release protocols.

8. The request indicates that "foreign organizations' work showed poor production", these organizations were "not in compliance with national development policy and strategy" and that there was a "lack of efficient activities and coordination" during the time NGOs were present. The 10MSP President requested addition information on the departure of NGOs from Eritrea. Eritrea responded by indicating that, with the start of humanitarian demining in 2001, a number of international demining organizations participated in Eritrea and that, despite the huge amount of funds that they had at their disposal, the operational results they achieved were minimal and that the activities of these organizations were not in compliance with the national development policy and strategy. Eritrea indicated that at that stage, the Eritrean Mine Action Program (EMAP) was newly formed with inadequate human resources and capacity and, hence, the EMAP worked jointly with the UNMEE

MACC until it built its own capacity. Eritrea also indicated that, with the restructuring of mine action in the country by the issuing of proclamation 123/2002 and thereby establishing the Eritrean Demining Authority (EDA), most NGOs which were working in mine action left the country and that, since then, significant assistance for the Eritrean National Demining Program has not been forthcoming.

9. 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 thanks to the efforts of partner organizations, the first phase of the strategic plan (2005-2009) was accomplished with all internally displaced persons (approximately 64,000) having returned to their original places, landmine/UXO clearance having taken place in the highly impacted areas in the Gash Barka and Debub regions to ensure the safe movement of the communities and sustained mine risk education resulting in the reduction of mine and UXO victims. The request also indicates that infrastructure projects such as roads, schools, clinics and dams started to be constructed in Eritrea since the liberation of the country after carrying out verification and conducting clearance of landmines. The request further mentions the following socio-economic benefit of mine clearance: vast agricultural area converted into use in the Shilalo and Shilalo surrounding in Gash Barka Region, Kohaito tourism area in the Debub region and 4 drinking water dams constructed in the Debub region, erection of electrical poles, six bridge construction undertaken along the Asmara Massawa road after absolute clearance and verification, clearance at the Massawa airport, Dahlak housing and other infrastructure construction projects in the Red sea Region and the Bisha Mining project, Gerset and Franco dams in Gash Barka Region.

10. The President of the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties requested information from Eritrea concerning the conducting of daily check-ups on suspected roads of “newly laid mines”. Eritrea responded by indicating that the checking of roads is conducted to prevent casualties from newly laid Anti-Vehicle landmines. Eritrea indicated that this type of incident has occurred in previous years making Eritrea vigilant and proactive to prevent casualties.

11. As noted, Eritrea’s request is for 3 years (until 1 February 2015). The request indicates that, by requesting 3 years, Eritrea seeks to conduct non-technical and technical survey to cancel or confirm mined areas in order to identify the exact remaining challenges and submit a second request by March 2014 containing concrete plans for fulfilment of Eritrea’s Article 5 obligations while continuing to implement its demining program with existing teams. The request indicated that Eritrea assumes that 50% of the remaining LIS areas will be reduced by the end of 2012 based on the fact that the LIS areas are exaggerated and that a number of clearance activities have already been carried out following the conflict in the same communities visited by the LIS.

12. The President of the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties asked Eritrea why, given that the survey will be completed at the end of 2012, it would need an addition year to develop a second request. Eritrea responded by indicating that Eritrea’s non-technical survey will be completed by the end of 2012 and Eritrea will then proceed to verify and reduce the remaining area using technical survey, completing this task by 2014. Eritrea also indicated that their second request will be submitted 9 months before the extended deadline of February 2015, in March 2014 when Eritrea will be able to submit a clear and accurate report for the remaining specific area which Eritrea assumes will be smaller than currently indicated.

13. The 10MSP President asked Eritrea if the EDA has received external technical assistance on re-surveying in order to benefit from the latest methods, equipment and lessons learned in land release, and, if Eritrea has considered accepting international mine action operators or advisors, including to help conduct the survey according to best international practices. The President also asked if Eritrea considered partnering with

NGOs or other international actors on clearance in order to facilitate international assistance and to increase the pace of demining. Eritrea responded by indicating that currently the EDA has not recruited technical assistance for resurveying given that Eritrea understands that it can manage with national capacity but that experts can be engaged if deemed necessary. Eritrea also indicated that it has enough local human resource capacity to organize and deploy demining teams that have rich experience in humanitarian demining and that there is no need to invite external operators. The analysing group noted that the conditions related to the departure of demining organisations from Eritrea remain unclear and that involving non-governmental organizations and international operators may increase Eritrea's efficiency in mine clearance operations in the country.

14. The request indicates the following as impeding circumstances: (a) that the contamination problem in Eritrea covers a large surface area and extends throughout the country; (b) that the external assistance acquired since the start of the program and currently available is insignificant compared to the remaining task of mine action; (c) that, although Eritrea has a great amount of personnel trained in humanitarian demining, the available equipment does not allow for deployment of full capacity; and, (e) that there existed a lack of efficient activities and coordination during the participation of several NGOs in the early stages of humanitarian demining operations.

15. The request provides annual projections of the amount of area to be released each year between 2011 and 2015, with these projections based on an assumed clearance rate of 800 square meters per team per day: a total of 960'000 square meters in 2011 because it will be a half year progress, 2'304'000 square meters in 2012, 2'688'000 square meters in 2013, 3'072'000 square meters in 2014 and 3'072'000 square meters in 2015. The request indicates that according to priorities within Eritrea's plan, demining teams are going to be deployed in the impacted regions of Aneba (sub regions Halhal, Keren, Haboro, Geleb, Hagaz and Kerkebet) and Northern Red Sea Region (sub region Karora, Mahmimet, Afabet and Shieb). The request further indicates that non-technical survey followed by technical survey will be conducted in Anseba Region (sub regions Hagaz, Keren, Halhal, Geleb, Elaberid, Hamelmalo, Asmat and Aditekelezan), Semienawi Keih Bahri region (subregions Karora, Afabet, Shieb, Foro and Massawa), Debubawi Keih Bahri Region (subregions Maakel Debubawi Keih Bahri, Debub Debubawi Keih Bahri, Assab and Araata) and Maakel Region (sub regions Serejeka, Gala Nefhi and Berik).

16. The request indicated that, with necessary refresher training, a total of 17 teams of 60 persons each can be mobilized and deployed to conduct clearance of landmines, UXO and explosive remnants of war and that at the moment there are 3 survey teams, 3 explosive ordnance disposal teams, 2 quality assurance operational sections and 10 standardized mine risk education teams including 150 community volunteers monitored by the Eritrean Demining Authority and 57 community volunteers monitored by the Red Cross Society of Eritrea. The request also indicates that there will be an increase in capacity with the current two demining teams increasing to five teams and one team being added per year with eight teams expected by the end of 2014, two EOD teams being expanded to three teams by July 2011, and two survey teams being expanded to three survey teams by July 2011. The request further indicates that refresher training will need to be given and deployment will need to occur by mid July 2011 for the fulfilment of goals within the extension.

17. The request indicates that, during the earlier years following the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia, a number of non-governmental organizations and commercial companies were actively engaged in mine clearance in Eritrea using a range wealth of mine clearance methods and equipment. The request further indicates that, following the creation of the EDA and the departure of these organizations in 2007 as well as the subsequent drop of significant funding, Eritrea has been employing solely manual clearance as it is seen as

the cheapest and most effective option to carry out mine clearance operations with the limited resources and capacity that is locally available.

18. The analysing group noted that Eritrea could benefit from ensuring 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 Eritrea 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.

19. The 10MSP President requested addition information on the non-technical and technical survey methodology to be employed over the course of the extension period including national standards and criteria by which the EDA determines that an area can be cancelled or released. The President also inquired regarding the basis for predicting that survey will result in 50 percent area reduction. Eritrea responded by indicating that the methodology that will be applied in releasing land after conducting non-technical and technical survey will be following standard national land release procedures. Eritrea indicated that starting from its initial assessments, the national authority contacts the defence forces army engineers unit, the MRE unit, the regional administrators, concerned ministries, community representatives and other relevant groups for further study and information about the past history and current impact of landmines. After getting full aggregated information from all these sources in addition to the authorities own observations, land release protocol procedures are implemented. Eritrea indicated that it has started a pilot project program for land release by conducting area reduction through non-technical means with the project being evaluated as an effective benchmark for our planned future programs. Eritrea further indicated that it has observed that people walk to perform their daily tasks through some of the areas recorded as mine impacted by the LIS and that such area are usually used by people with no incidents but are still recorded as impacted until they are formally released. Based on such estimations, Eritrea assumed that the non-technical survey methodologies may be the most effective and efficient way to release land.

20. The request indicates that Eritrea projects that US\$8.5 million will be required for activities related to the implementation of Article 5 during the period of 2011-2015. This includes US\$ 4.8 million for salaries, US\$ 2.6 million for operations and US\$ 938,800 for supplies. The request further indicates that Eritrea, since 2001, has invested its own resources on an annual basis into humanitarian demining through the provision of the cost for all operational teams and sustainable logistical provisions at an average of approximately US\$ 507,531 per year. The request further indicates that Eritrea intends to invest US\$ 4.8 million during the extension period to cover the costs of deminers, with the remaining US\$ 3.6 million to be provided by sources other than Eritrea. The analysing group noted that the funds required to fulfil Eritrea's obligations surpass the amount of funds that have historically been provided to Eritrea and by Eritrea in the past 5 years.

21. The request notes activities that Eritrea will carry out to mobilize resources including the speaking with donors during Convention meetings, sharing the challenges and needs of Eritrea with the international community, holding of donor consultation meetings to present the updated national strategy 2011-2015, taking advantage of activities to commemorate the UN's International Mine Action Day, and, working with the UNDP and UNICEF to investigate the opportunity to acquire more funds. The 10MSP President asked if Eritrea will be in a position to continue with surveys as planned should additional financial support not be forthcoming. Eritrea responded by indicating that the government of Eritrea is and will remain committed to do its utmost efforts to execute mine clearance operations.

22. The request includes other relevant information that may be of use to the States Parties in assessing and considering the request including a table listing the location of each area of concern and a table listing progress to date according to specific areas.

23. The analysing group noted that, while it is unfortunate that almost twelve years since entry into force a State Party is unable to specify how much work remains and how it will be carried out, it is positive that Eritrea intends to renew efforts to garner an understanding of the true remaining extent of the challenge and to develop plans accordingly that precisely project the amount of time that will be required to complete Article 5 implementation. The analysing group noted that by requesting a three year extension, Eritrea was projecting that it would need approximately 3 years from the date of submission of its request to obtain clarity regarding the remaining challenge, produce a detailed plan and submit a second extension request. The analysing group further noted that it would be beneficial if Eritrea was able to do so in less than three years given the indication by Eritrea of the socio-economic benefits that will flow from implementing Article 5 and the prediction that the survey needed to establish an understanding of the remaining contamination would be finished by the end of 2012.

24. The analyzing group noted that given the importance of external support to ensure timely implementation, Eritrea could benefit from developing as soon as possible a resource mobilization strategy that takes into account, as is implied by the extension request, the need to reach out to donors. The analyzing group also noted that Eritrea might benefit from outreach to international mine action operators or advisors in order to take advantage of the latest survey methods, equipment and lessons learned on land release as well as to access additional sources of international funding. The analyzing group further noted that both Eritrea and all States Parties could benefit if Eritrea provided updates on progress made in obtaining clarity regarding the remaining challenge and in producing a detailed plan at meetings of the Standing Committees and at Meetings of the States Parties.
