

GICHD remarks on APMC Article 5 extension request submitted by the Republic of Colombia

18th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention November 2020

The GICHD would like to congratulate the government of Colombia on the development and submission of their recent Article 5 extension request for four years and ten months until 31st December 2025. The document itself is well constructed and includes a significant amount of detail including, important data and statistics.

The extension request demonstrates significant efforts to consider and address the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men, in line with Action #3 of the Oslo Action Plan.

The GICHD recognizes that Colombia has made significant improvements in Information Management, whilst further efforts are undoubtedly still required, the recent enhancements in data entry from operators and the integration of multiple IM systems will help contribute to the realization of Action #9 of the Oslo Action Plan.

The request contains detailed multi-year work plans for the extension period in accordance with Action #23, of the Oslo Action Plan. The GICHD notes that the operational plan predicts that average productivity will be around 30% higher by 2025 than that which has been recorded by the programme in recent years. Such an aspiration is to be commended. In order to realise such an ambitious goal the programme will need to continue strengthening its ongoing efforts to systematically integrate sound Land Release practices, whilst maintaining a high level of confidence in Land Release products through credible Quality Management Systems and processes in line with IMAS.

It is also clear from the document that Colombia has prioritized the strengthening of EORE programming in recent years, in line with Action #24 of the Oslo Action Plan.

It is made clear in the request that certain overarching contextual factors exist that might potentially limit Colombia's ability to address all known contamination within the requested extension period, most notably;

- As the Colombian Office for the High Commissioner for Peace, has correctly highlighted the existing security situation and in particular the use of improvised AP mines by Organised Armed Groups (GAO) is one of the challenges for achieving completion.
- The mine action programme is facing challenges gaining a truly accurate, evidence-based account of the extent of APM contamination in over 150 municipalities where security concerns hinder access. The status of these municipalities will need to be monitored closely during the extension period, and a priority should be given to establishing the extent of contamination they contain in an effort to determine whether (or not) this could significantly affect Colombia's completion timeline.

The GICHD would like to again commend the Colombian Office for the High Commissioner for Peace for submitting such a detailed Article 5 extension request, and to reaffirm its commitment to supporting Colombia in its path to completion.