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**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**

29 September 2020

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**Eighteenth Meeting****Geneva, 16-20 November 2020**

Item 11 of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of requests submitted under Article 5****Analysis of the request submitted by Colombia 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 Committee on Article 5 Implementation (Austria,  
Canada, Norway and Zambia)**

1. Colombia ratified the Convention on 6 September 2000. The Convention entered into force for Colombia on 1 March 2001. In its initial transparency report submitted on 15 March 2002, Colombia reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Colombia was obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 March 2011. Colombia submitted a request for an extension of its deadline on 31 March 2010 to the President of the Second Review Conference. On 18 May 2010, the President wrote to Colombia to request additional information. Colombia provided a response on 17 June 2010 and subsequently, on 13 August 2010, Colombia submitted a revised request. Colombia's request was for 10 years, until 1 March 2021. The Tenth Meeting of the States Parties (10MSP) agreed unanimously to grant the request.

2. In granting Colombia's request in 2010, the 10MSP noted that while it is understandable that Colombia has asked for the maximum time available given the extent of the known or suspected contamination, Colombia is doing so based on an incomplete picture. The 10MSP further noted that after almost ten years since entry into force, Colombia does not have the information in place to report in a more precise manner on the location of areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines and hence to develop an implementation plan based on concrete information.

3. On 19 March 2020 Colombia submitted to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation ("the Committee") a request for an extension of its 1 March 2021 deadline. On 25 June 2020, the Committee on Article 5 Implementation wrote to Colombia to request additional information. Colombia provided additional information on 7 August 2020 to the Committee in response to the Committee's questions. The Committee noted with satisfaction that Colombia had submitted its request in a timely manner and had engaged in a cooperative

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\* This document was scheduled for publication after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



dialogue with the Committee. Colombia's request is for four years and 10 months, until 31 December 2025.

4. The request indicates that the establishment of a prioritization model allowed Colombia to categorize its 1'122 municipalities as follows: high impact (199 municipalities), medium impact (291 municipalities), low impact (183 municipalities) and no registered impact (449 municipalities). The request indicates that this typology is based partially on accident reports registered in Colombia's database since 1990 and is cross-checked with additional sources including national and international organisations that collect data on the impact of contamination.

5. The request indicates that in carrying out survey and clearance operations, Colombia employs "sector" as the minimum territorial unit resulting from the division of a zone or municipality assigned to a humanitarian demining operator. The request indicates that these "sectors" are identified and delimited jointly by the local authority, community and operator as part of the community liaison process. The request indicates that in accordance with National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), Non-Technical Survey (NTS) must be carried out in each sector. The request also includes information on methodologies employed by Colombia such as the "Municipal Security Council" to verify information available in the national database together with affected communities, local authorities and mine action stakeholders.

6. The request indicates that as of 31 December 2019 a total of 6,368,003 square metres have been cleared leading to the destruction of 3,733 anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature with a total of 212 municipalities declared free of suspicion and an additional 181 municipalities processed through information certification methodologies.

7. The request indicates that suspicion of the presence of mines has been reduced from 715 to 322 municipalities and that 156 municipalities with a total of 5,566 sectors have been allocated for survey and clearance, and 1 additional municipality is in the process of being allocated. The request indicates that survey carried out in 2,723 sectors led to the identification of 1,344 Hazardous Areas (HAs) and Confirmed Hazardous Areas (CHAs) with an estimated size of 7,491,763 square metres of which 877 HAs and CHAs measuring 4,157,564 square metres have been addressed leading to the destruction of 2,151 anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature.

8. The Committee welcomes the information provided by Colombia and noted the importance of Colombia continuing to reporting in a manner consistent with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) by providing information on the remaining challenges, disaggregating by 'suspected hazardous areas' and 'confirmed hazardous areas' and their relative size, as well as by the type of contamination and reporting on progress in accordance with the land release methodology employed (i.e. cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey, or cleared through clearance).

9. The request indicates that within the 2 national military humanitarian demining entities, capacity has been increased from 360 accredited deminers in 2011 to 3,926 accredited deminers in 2019 and that a total of 9 civilian humanitarian demining organisations (6 international and 3 national) have been accredited with a total of 640 accredited deminers. The request further indicates that the increase in land release capacities required the development of a quality-assurance mechanism which was created through an external monitoring component provided by the Organization of American States.

10. The Committee wrote to Colombia to request information on how the structure of the national military humanitarian demining entities contribute to ensuring the upholding of principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality in their work. Colombia indicated that the national military humanitarian demining capacity set themselves apart from the Armed Forces due to the nature of their humanitarian work including through the use of uniforms that set them apart from other uniformed personnel and the non-use of weapons in the performance of their tasks. Colombia further responded by providing additional information on relevant operational procedures and indicating that military humanitarian demining entities operate under strict guidelines and in areas where the security situation is such that the principle of "do no harm" can be applied.

11. The request provides information on Colombia's efforts to enhance information management processes including by the development of, as a compliment to the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database, of a Peripheral Information System which is web-based and has made it possible to record information and ensure traceability with documentation related to operations, as well as provided a common space for the sharing of information with all interested parties and for reviewing the information recorded in the IMSMA. The Committee noted the importance of Colombia continuing to ensure that its national information management system contains accurate and up-to-date data on the status of implementation and welcomes Colombia's efforts in making information accessible to stakeholders.

12. The request indicates that over the course of the initial extension request period NMAS have been developed, in line with IMAS. The request indicates that the development of a NMAS on NTS has led to significant progress in identifying mined areas through an evidence-based approach through information collection, analysis of evidence and consultation with all sources of information in the assigned area. The Committee noted the importance of Colombia ensuring that its NMAS remain up to date in accordance with the latest IMAS, adapt them to new challenges and employ best practices to ensure efficient and effective implementation. The Committee further noted the importance of updating the NMAS through an inclusive consultation process with all stakeholders.

13. The request indicates the following as impeding circumstances during the initial extension request period: (a) the difficulty of carrying out humanitarian demining operations due to the presence of organized armed groups carrying out illegal activities and employing anti-personnel mines; and (b) the magnitude of the challenge.

14. The request indicates that the remaining implementation challenge in the 2,723 sectors where survey has been carried out totals 467 HAs and CHAs measuring 3,334,199 square metres. The Committee wrote to Colombia to request clarity on the remaining challenge, specifically the disaggregation of identified mined areas in line with IMAS. Colombia responded by providing a table which disaggregates the 467 identified mine areas into 198 HA's measuring 1,150,077 square metres and 269 CHAs measuring 2,184,121 square metres.

15. The request indicates that in the 2,843 sectors pending survey in the 156 municipalities, the remaining challenge was estimated using statistical projections based on identified trends. The request indicates that for this analysis, 4,700 square metres is taken as the average value of the size for the HAs/CHAs identified during non-technical survey, and an increase of 5% of the size of HA/CHA is established to reflect the actual total square metres which will be cleared. The request indicates that, in the remaining sectors, Colombia estimates the discovery of a total of 1,053 HAs and CHAs measuring an estimated 4,949'100 square metres. In addition to this, the request indicates that an additional 165 municipalities without the necessary security conditions to carry out humanitarian demining activities remain to be addressed.

16. The Committee noted the importance of Colombia identifying as soon as possible the precise perimeter of mined areas, to the extent possible, and establish an updated evidence-based baseline of contamination in the remaining municipalities based on inclusive consultations with stakeholders including women, girls, boys and men from affected communities. The Committee noted that doing so could support Colombia's prioritization efforts and ensure that resources are directed to the most affected areas. The Committee recognizes the uncertain nature of Colombia's estimates and noted that a more accurate estimate of the amount of time and resources required to complete implementation of Article 5 should be available once survey efforts have been carried out.

17. The request indicates that the remaining mined areas have both an economic and social impact on local communities denying freedom of movement to local communities and preventing land from being used for productive use. The request indicates that, over the course of 2019, a total of 108 victims were registered (60 civilian and 48 military), of which 59 were men (3 killed) and 1 women (injured). The request further indicates that clearance operations have supported the safe use of infrastructure including airports and bridges, health centres, education centres and electrical towers. The Committee noted that completion of Article 5 obligations during the requested extension period had the potential of making a

significant contribution to improving human safety and socioeconomic conditions in Colombia.

18. As noted, Colombia's request for extension is for four years and ten months (1 March 2021 – 31 December 2025). The request indicates that this is in line with Colombia's National Strategic Plan 2020-2025 "Towards a Colombia Free of Suspicion of Antipersonnel Mines for all Colombians" as well as with the aspirations of the States Parties of the Convention.

19. The Committee wrote to Colombia to seek clarity concerning Colombia's objective for the extension period, given that the request indicates that it aims to address the remaining contamination in the 156 municipalities that today present the necessary security conditions to carry out humanitarian demining operation, and not to address all mined areas under its jurisdiction or control during this time frame. Colombia responded by indicating that Colombia continues to confront a situation in which organized armed groups continue to employ anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature and that according to the operational plan for demining, it is expected that 80% of the challenge be addressed by 2025, considering a number of variables including the dynamic of the conflict. Colombia also indicated that the operating plan will be reviewed in 2023. Colombia further indicated that the technical plan for fulfilment of the extension request was prepared in a participatory manner including all sector stakeholders.

20. The request contains a detailed work plan and budget for the period of 2020-2023 to complete survey and clearance in the 156 municipalities as follows: 194 areas measuring 1'023'879 square metres in 2020, 101 mine areas measuring 1'328'253 square metres in 2021, 140 mined areas measuring 950'263 square metres in 2022 and 32 mined areas measuring 31'804 square metres in 2023. The request also indicates that an additional 4'949'100 square metres will be addressed in areas pending non-technical survey. The request further indicates that Colombia aims to address the remaining 165 municipalities over the course of 2024-2025. The Committee noted that given that the estimate of contamination is uncertain, so too must be the annual projections of what will be released. The Committee welcomed Colombia's commitment to update the States Parties on progress on an annual basis.

21. The request indicates that operations in the 156 municipalities have been tasked to 8 humanitarian demining organisations. The Committee wrote to Colombia to request information on how the reduction in capacity, given the withdrawal from operations of some of these organisations, will impact targets and affect timelines in Colombia's request for extension. Colombia responded by providing information on efforts put forward to secure the necessary resources for implementation and its intention to reassign areas to other organisations to restart humanitarian demining efforts in these affected communities. The request further indicates that the Operational Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2020-2025 establishes actions aimed at reviewing in 2020 the assignment of tasks to ensure a more efficient process and establishing a process of allocating and reallocating municipalities and/or areas between Humanitarian Demining Organisations. The Committee welcomed Colombia's efforts to review its methodologies in allocating and reallocating task to organisations.

22. In noting that Colombia has a workplan and budget for the period of 2020-2023 to address contamination in 156 municipalities and noting that Colombia may require additional time, even beyond the requested extension period, to address its remaining challenge, the Committee encouraged Colombia to consider requesting the minimum amount of time (i.e. 3 years) to finalize the survey and clearance operations in the 156 municipalities currently being addressed. The Committee noted that Colombia could use this period to gather and assess data on landmine contamination and other relevant information with a view to develop a meaningful forward looking plan based on this information, and then submit a third request containing plans based on a clearer understanding of the extent of the challenge and which project with greater certainty the amount of time that will be required to complete Article 5 implementation. Colombia responded by indicating that it has presented a plan until 2025 considering the capacity of humanitarian demining organisations and the results of operations which took place between 2016-2020. Colombia also responded by reiterating its commitment to keep States Parties updated on new information within its Article 7 reports

and that it expects to have more clarity in 2023 of contamination in the 165 municipalities to be assigned.

23. The request indicates that in the 165 municipalities the Humanitarian Demining Plan 2020-2025 will apply a methodology of “micro-focalization”, which aims to define criteria based on evidence validated and documented by local sources to identify suspected presence of anti-personnel mines. The Committee wrote to Colombia to request information on any additional approaches being considered to collect information and address contamination in these municipalities. Colombia responded by indicating that the first step will be the collection and verification of information on, for example, the socioeconomic context and dynamics of the armed conflict. Colombia also indicated that once information verification has been carried out, the methodology to be applied must be determined according to the particular case. Colombia further reported that, together with the Inter-institutional Agency for Humanitarian Demining, a platform will be established for the military and local/ethnic civil authority, community and the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP), to identify and delimit possible areas for intervention.

24. The request includes a number of objectives to be achieved during the implementation of the 2020-2025 Humanitarian Demining Plan including, amongst others:

- (a) development, revision, updating and adoption of NMAS on land release in an inclusive manner;
- (b) updating of the methodology for the allocation and reallocation of tasks;
- (c) establishment of a methodology for the management of residual contamination and increasing coordination between local governments and mine action partners.

25. The Committee welcomes the objectives highlighted in Colombia’s Humanitarian Demining Plan 2020-2025. The Committee emphasises the importance of Colombia ensuring the updating and adoption of land release standards, in an inclusive manner, and the importance of Colombia making use of the full range of practical methods to release land as soon as possible and to continue to seek improved land release and certification techniques which could lead to Colombia fulfilling its obligations in a shorter time frame.

26. The Committee wrote to Colombia to request clarity on its efforts to establish a sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas discovered after completion. Colombia indicated that the policy on residual risk will be addressed within the demining standards that are currently being developed. The Committee highlighted the importance of Colombia establishing a sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas as soon as possible. The Committee further highlighted the importance of Colombia determining the national response to ensure a long-term solution. The Committee highlighted the importance of sustainability, given the eventual departure of organisations from Colombia.

27. The request includes information on Colombia’s efforts to integrate gender and diversity in its mine action strategy and work plans, including its efforts to ensure a context specific approach in carrying out mine action activities in indigenous reservations and afro descendant communities amongst others. The request indicates that the approach also requires a focus on protection of the environment in the case of interventions in National Parks. The Committee welcomes Colombia reporting on this matter and noted the importance of Colombia continuing to report on its efforts to ensure that the different perspective of women, girls boys and men as well as the needs of mine survivors and affected communities are considered and inform all areas of Convention implementation.

28. The request indicates that in Type 1 and II municipalities which are assigned to humanitarian demining organisations, Mine Risk Education activities will be carried out by these organisations and/or the OAS, or through partner organisations, including international and local organisations such as UNICEF and indigenous organisations. The request indicates that mine risk education activities during the extension period of 2020 – 2025 will cost approximately USD 13 million. The Committee welcomes the information provided by Colombia and noted the importance of Colombia providing context-specific mine risk education and reduction programmes to all affected populations and groups at risk.

29. The request indicates that Colombia projects that US\$ 246'965'430 will be required for the period of 2020-2025, with US\$ 72'384'235 expected from the Government of Colombia and US\$ 174'097'742 expected in support from its partners through international funding sources. The request indicates that this includes a total of US\$ 183'257'487 for humanitarian demining, US\$ 13'032'427 for Mine Risk Education, US\$ 8'320'227 for Victim Assistance, US\$ 6'627'536 for information management and US\$ 35'727'754 for technical assistance.

30. The request and the additional information submitted by Colombia includes other relevant information that may be of use to the States Parties in assessing and considering the request, including additional information on the remaining mined areas, their characteristics, terrain, and impact, together with tables that provide greater clarity on the nature and extent of contamination within Colombia and the activities to be undertaken, as well as risks to the plan's implementation. The request also contains information on the integration of humanitarian demining operations into broader national frameworks.

31. In noting that Colombia provided implementation milestones for the period of 2020-2023 and Colombia's intention to review its work plan in 2023, the Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from Colombia submitting to the Committee by 30 April 2023 an updated detailed work plan for the remaining period covered by the extension. The Committee emphasised that this work plan should contain an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, annual projections of which areas would be dealt with by which organisations during the remaining period covered by the request, and a detailed updated budget.

32. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the information provided in the request and subsequently in response to the Committee's questions is comprehensive, complete and clear. The Committee further noted that the plan presented by Colombia is workable, lends itself well to be monitored, and states clearly which factors could affect the pace of implementation. The Committee also noted that the plan is detailed, costed and multi-year. The Committee also noted that the plan is ambitious and that its success is contingent upon stable funding, retaining strong partnerships with international stakeholders and other matters creating an environment conducive for implementation. In this regard, the Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from Colombia reporting annually, by 30 April, to the States Parties on the following:

(a) progress made relative to the commitments contained in Colombia's Humanitarian Demining Operational Plan 2020-2025 during the extension period, including on the results of survey and clearance efforts in a manner consistent with IMAS;

(b) adjusted milestones including information on the number of areas and amount of mined area to be addressed annually and how priorities have been established;

(c) update on how additional clarity obtained may change Colombia's assessment of the remaining implementation challenge;

(d) progress made relative to the development and adoption of land release standards and other efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance, including through an efficient process of allocation and re-allocation of municipalities and/or areas;

(e) progress made in the establishment of a sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas discovered following completion;

(f) changes in the security situation and how these changes positively or negatively affect implementation;

(g) progress made to strengthen the inclusive nature of Colombia's Mine Action Programme through the establishment of a humanitarian demining platform, including the terms of reference, scope, membership and meeting frequency;

(h) information on how implementation efforts take into consideration the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities;

(i) updates regarding the development and implementation of a detailed, costed and multi-year plan for context-specific mine risk education and reduction in affected communities, including information on the methodologies used, the challenges faced and the results achieved, with information disaggregated by gender and age;

(j) Resource mobilisation efforts, external financing received and resources made available by the government of Colombia to support implementation efforts, including through efforts to facilitate operations of international demining organisations and indigenous capacities, and the results of these efforts.

33. The Committee noted the importance, in addition to Colombia 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, Meetings of the States Parties and Review Conferences, as well as through Article 7 reports using the Guide for Reporting.

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