Comments on Mauritania's Article 5 Extension Request, delivered by Mine Action Review
Intersessional Meetings, 30 June – 2 July 2020

Mauritania's original Article 5 deadline of 1 January 2011, was previously extended twice and currently ends on 1 January 2021. Mauritania had previously declared fulfilment of its Article 5 obligations at the Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties in November 2018.

However, if Mauritania believes that there are still suspected or confirmed mined areas under either its jurisdiction or its control, then we welcome its extension request and support it being granted by the other States Parties. This would ensure Mauritania remains in compliance with Article 5 until such time as it can investigate, and if confirmed, clear and release any remaining anti-personnel mine contamination in areas under its jurisdiction or control.

It would first be important to clarify whether the areas in question are currently under Mauritania's effective control. If so, and they are also under its jurisdiction, they should proceed with all speed to undertake an assessment mission with Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), as soon as funding and restrictions regarding COVID-19 permit.

If, however, the areas are under Mauritania's effective control but not under its jurisdiction, discussions need to be held as a matter of urgency with other concerned states, in particular Morocco and the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic.

It would also be important to know whether these mined areas are newly discovered or are areas previously recorded as mined but were previously thought to be not under Mauritania's jurisdiction or its control.

Once completed, we look forward to learning the results of the assessment mission which should clarify if Mauritania still has an Article 5 obligation, and if so, provide details on the extent and location of the remaining mined areas under its jurisdiction or control, and Mauritania's plans to release them—including submission of a follow-on Extension Request, if required.

Thank you.