

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION BY IRAQ

COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION (Austria, Canada, Norway, Zambia)

Intersessional Meetings 30 June -2 July 2020

I. Progress in implementation (OAP Action #22,#21, #8)

1. Iraq reported that in 2019, the Directorate of Mine Action (DMA)¹ addressed a total of 34 mined areas measuring 6,325,205 square metres, including 5,427,183 square metres reduced and 898,022 square metres cleared destroying in the process 2,941 anti-personnel mines, and 2,302 other items of explosive ordnance. Iraq also reported that in 2019, the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Authority (IKMAA)² addressed a total of 812 mined areas measuring 2,267,740 square metres, including 439,919 square meters reduced, and 1,827,821 square metres cleared, destroying in the process 8,947 explosive devices.
2. The Committee observed that Iraq reported to be affected by anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature and welcomes Iraq's efforts to apply all provisions and obligations under the Convention to such contamination (Action #21). Iraq reported that the DMA addressed 293 anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature areas measuring 75,377,693 square metres, including 35,133,307 square metres cancelled, and 40,244,386 square metres cleared. In the process destroying 9,254 IED and 9,774 items of other explosive items. Iraq also reported that IKMAA addressed 90 IED areas measuring 3,177,672 square metres, in the process destroying 45 IED and 133 items of unexploded ordnance, (UXO).
3. The Committee noted the importance of disaggregating anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature from other items of IEDS in Iraq's future reporting.
4. Iraq reported that the DMA discovered and recorded 19 mined areas measuring 31,883,029 square metres. The DMA indicated that information on contamination in Muthanna was mentioned in Iraq's last report, in 2019 the DMA analysed 2018 NTS reports provided by Norwegian People's Aid and updated its information on the extent of contamination. The DMA further reported that areas discovered in Missan Province were discovered by accredited commercial companies through their work in oil fields.
5. The DMA further reported that 1,160 mined areas were discovered and recorded to be affected by IEDs measuring 217,605,396 square metres.
6. The Committee noted with satisfaction that progress reported by Iraq is above the estimated amount of area projected by Iraq in its 2019 updated work plan. The Committee observed that information provided by Iraq on progress in implementation allowed for comparability with that provided in its 2019 updated work plan. The Committee noted that Iraq has improved the quality of information by reporting in accordance with IMAS and by using the Guide to reporting (Action #22, #8).

¹ The Directorate of Mine Action (DMA) represents the federal government and covers all governorates except the Kurdistan region provinces.

² The Kurdistan of Iraq Mine Action Agency (IKMAA) covers the governorates of Erbil, Duhok, Slemani and Halabja.

II. Clarity regarding remaining challenge (OAP Action #18, 22)

7. The Committee observed that Iraq provided a high degree of clarity on its remaining challenge, (Action #18). Iraq reported that in areas under the responsibility of the DMA a total of 341 anti-personnel mined areas in 20 districts, measuring 1,025,595,060 square metres, including 293 confirmed hazardous areas measuring 1,008,304,514 square metres and 48 suspected hazardous areas measuring 17,290,546 square metres, remain to be addressed. The DMA also reported a total of 1,104 areas containing IEDs in 26 districts measuring a total of 626,282,033 square metres, including 752 confirmed IED areas measuring 344,500,329 square metres and 352 IED areas suspected to contain IEDs measuring 281,781,708 square metres, remain to be addressed, (Action #22).
8. Iraq reported that in areas under the responsibility of IKMAA a total of 3,240 mined areas in 29 districts measuring 213,589,117 square metres, including 3,111 confirmed hazardous areas measuring 182,094,295 square metres and 129 suspected hazardous areas measuring 31,494,822 square metres, remain to be addressed. IKMAA also reported 20 areas known or suspected to contain IEDs measuring 1,303,261 remain to be addressed.
9. The Committee welcomed the updates reported by Iraq and noted a minor discrepancy in the figures reported in Section C2 to those figures given in Annex 9.
10. The Committee would welcome further updates from Iraq disaggregating anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature from other items of IED (Action #21).
11. The Committee noted the importance of Iraq submitting to Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties, further information on its efforts to identify the precise perimeter of mined areas, to the extent possible, and establish evidence-based, accurate baselines of contamination, (Action #18).

III. National plans for clearance and survey (OAP Actions #1, #2, #3, #19, #20, #26)

12. The Committee observed that Iraq had a national evidence based and costed plan for clearance and survey in place (Action #2, #19). The Committee recalled that in Iraq's 2019 updated work plan Iraq projected to address in areas under the responsibility of DMA 164,793,974.71 square metres in 2020, 167,708,057.77 square metres in 2021, 34,968,996.78 square metres in 2022, 43,711,245.98 square metres in 2023-2024, 49,539,412.11 square metres in 2025, 49,539,412.11 square metres in 2026 and 37,883,079.85 square metres in 2027.
13. The Committee noted that in its updated work plan Iraq projected to address in areas under the responsibility of IKMAA 9,085,237 square metres in 2020, 10,902,284 square metres in 2021, 21,804,568 square metres in 2022, 27,255,710 square metres in 2023 and 2024, and 30,889,805 square metres in 2025 and 2026. In this regard, the Committee would welcome information on adjusted milestones on an annual basis in future reports, including information on the number of areas and amount of area to be addressed annually against updated milestones and on how priorities have been established (Action #20).
14. The Committee also encourages Iraq to provide updated information regarding its efforts to address 150,223,559.38 square metres through preliminary technical survey in 2020 and 2021 as reported in its updated work plan submitted to the Fourth Review Conference.
15. The Committee noted that Iraq had reported on its efforts to integrate Convention implementation activities at a national level and has a national mine action strategic plan in place for the period, (2017-2021). The Committee welcomes further information from Iraq on its efforts to integrate

Convention implementation activities into national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, humanitarian response plans (Action #1).

16. The Committee further noted that in its 2019 work plan, Iraq indicated that the Government of Iraq would allocate an annual financial commitment towards implementation representing 60% of all mine action related funding. Iraq reported that it had, “requested the Prime Minister as a Chairman of the Supreme National Mine Action Committee to add an amount of US \$30,570,000 annually for the general budget to carry out surveys and clearance operations for mine fields”. In this regard, the Committee would welcome information on the allocation of state resources and international support of its work plan, as given in its 2019 updated work plan, (Action #1).

17. The Committee observed that Iraq had reported in detail on its commitment to the alignment and integration of gender equality into the sector, including the establishment of a Gender Unit in 2016 who undertake joint activities with respective units of mine action. The Committee welcomes Iraq’s efforts in this regard and welcomes further information on how Iraq ensures consideration for gender and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities in the development of its work plans as well as in ongoing work to achieve completion of its obligations under Article 5 (Action #3).

18. The Committee observed that Iraq has made provision for a sustainable national capacity, including Military Engineering Units, Border Guard Forces and the Directorate of Energy Police, (Ministry of Interior), to address previously unknown areas, including newly mined areas discovered following completion. In this regard, the Committee welcomes Iraq continuing to provide updates on its efforts to establish a sustainable national capacity to address any previously unknown mined areas that may be discovered following Iraq declaring completion of its Article 5 obligations (Action #26).

IV. Efficient and expedient implementation (OAP Actions #5, #9, #27)

19. Iraq reported that NPA had supported RMAC-S in updating its standards for non-technical survey and technical survey. The Committee would welcome from Iraq further information concerning the status of its National Mine Action Standards and if National Mine Action Standards are up to date with International Mine Action Standards to ensure the efficient and expedient implementation of its mine action programme (Action #5).

20. Iraq reported that an information management system is in place. The Committee noted that Iraq’s Planning and Information Department (DMA) is supported by iMAAP and that its information management system is in constant development. The Committee welcomes Iraq’s efforts in this regard and would welcome further information from Iraq on maintaining an accurate and up-to-date information management system (Action #9).

21. The Committee noted that Iraq reported on its efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance operations and welcomes further information from Cambodia in this regard (Action #27).

V. Actions in accordance with plans in extension requests and decisions on them

22. The Committee observed that Iraq had acted on the decisions of the Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties (16MSP) by submitting an updated workplan to the Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties. The Committee recalled that in granting Iraq’s request, the 16MSP had also requested Iraq to submit updated information on several matters. The Committee welcomes the information provided by Iraq regarding; progress made relative to the commitments contained in Iraq’s two-year work plan during the extension period; geographically specific information on the

implementation of survey plans, locations and the results of these efforts and how additional clarity obtained may change Iraq's understanding of the remaining implementation challenge. The Committee further acknowledges the submission by Iraq of an updated work plan in 2019 as per the decision of the 16MSP.

23. The Committee would welcome updated information on the following decisions of the 16MSP:

- Changes in the security situation and how these changes positively or negatively affect implementation;
- Efforts to resolve political issues which prevent the carrying out of mine action activities in border areas of Iraq; and
- Resource mobilisation efforts and external financing received and resources made available by the government of Iraq to support implementation efforts, including through efforts to facilitate operations of international demining organisations and expanding of indigenous capacities, and the results of these efforts.

VI. Mine risk education and reduction (OAP Actions #28-32)

24. Iraq reported in detail on the actions it has taken to effectively exclude the population from areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, including the integration of mine risk education and reduction (MRE/R) into wider humanitarian, development, protection and education efforts (Action #32, #28). The Committee further noted the delivery of context specific MRE to population and groups at-risk, prioritisation of groups most at risk, and Iraq's efforts to build a national capacity to deliver mine risk education and reduction programmes (Action #29, #31). The Committee would welcome further information on Iraq's efforts to link mine risk education and reduction programmes and messages to an analysis of available casualty and contamination data (Action #30).