

**Mine Action Review Statement on Clearance, delivered by NPA on behalf of Mine Action Review
Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
15-19 November 2021**

Thank you, Mr President.

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Mine Action Review project.

According to the *Clearing the Mines 2021* report, in 2020 a global total of more than **153 square kilometres was cleared** of anti-personnel mines, with 98% of recorded clearance occurring in States Parties to the APMBC. Almost **173,000 emplaced anti-personnel mines were destroyed** during annual clearance and EOD operations, in addition to 16,000 anti-vehicle mines. This represents a 17% increase on 2019 and the highest worldwide total since 2015. It is a particularly impressive achievement against the backdrop of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

A total of 56 states and 3 other areas have mined areas under their jurisdiction or control, of which 34 are States Parties. State Party **Guinea-Bissau** has been added to the list this year, following its discovery of previously unrecorded mined areas.

Eritrea's Article 5 deadline expired on 31 December 2020 and it has not submitted a request for an extension. States Parties should address a critical violation of Article 5 by requesting clarification to Eritrea and mandating a fact-finding mission to the country, under Article 8, with a view to supporting Eritrea's swift return to compliance. **Cameroon** and **Mali** also have obligations under Article 5, as a result of new use of anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature by non-State armed groups on their territory, but neither State has an Article 5 deadline in place. Both States Parties should follow Nigeria's lead and request new Article 5 deadlines without further delay.

Although most affected States Parties have less than 20km² of mined area to release, only a handful are currently on track to meet their respective deadlines and **fewer than five States Parties are currently likely to complete clearance by end of 2025**. Worryingly, **no clearance** was reported to have taken place **in eleven States Parties** in 2020.

We remain concerned by **slow pace of survey and clearance** in too many States and by repeated Article 5 deadline extensions, especially by those states with relatively limited contamination and which aren't impacted by conflict or new use of mines. Senegal needs urgently to clarify when it will clear mines around its military camp. This is a serious compliance concern.

Mine Action Review **supports the call by ICBL and supportive States Parties for 19MSP to mandate an independent, inclusive and transparent review of the extension request process**, with participation from expert and civil society organizations, with concrete recommendations to be presented in 2022. The APMBC last comprehensively reviewed the Article 5 extension request process in 2012 and it is good practice to review such processes periodically to determine if they can be further strengthened to help support implementation, and if lessons can be learned between treaties, such as from the process used by the Convention on Cluster Munitions to analyse Article 4 extension requests. We stand ready to participate in any such review of the Article 5 process and serve on any such analysis group to support the work of the Article 5 committee.

We encourage all concerned States Parties to use the Oslo Action Plan to guide what is required for efficient, effective, and inclusive implementation of Article 5. We know the importance of **strong national ownership**, determining an **accurate baseline of contamination**, **elaboration of concrete action plans**, application of **efficient survey and clearance methodology** guided by **strong national**

mine action standards, and securing **sufficient and sustained** funding through to completion. **Gender and diversity** considerations must also be mainstreamed at every step.

However, Mine Action Review's **2021 monitoring of relevant indicators in the Oslo Action Plan**, based on our broader research, shows that too many States Parties are falling short on meeting many of these key actions and indicators.

We encourage all affected States Parties to establish **National Mine Action Platforms** or similar such forums (as per Oslo Action Plan Action #44), which we know are effective in improving coordination and identifying and overcoming challenges in Article 5 implementation.

We also encourage colleagues across the sector to identify and assess how their operations affect the natural environment and to mitigate the negative environmental impacts where possible. Mine Action Review has published a new **Policy Brief on 'Mitigating the Environmental Impacts of Explosive Ordnance and Land Release'**, which we hope can serve as a resource for national authorities and their implementing partners as they seek to minimise their environmental footprint.

Finally, we align ourselves with statements of the Gender and Diversity Working Group, of which we are currently co-chair.

Thank you.