



**19th Meeting of the States Parties to the
Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention
Hague, 15-19 November 2021.**

**Statement of the Federal Republic of Somalia
on Article-5 Extension Request.**

Presented by Dahir Abdirahman Abdulle

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

(Slide 1)

Good afternoon, on behalf of the government of Somalia, I would like to start by congratulating Netherlands for the Presidency of 19th Meeting of State Parties and express my appreciation to you, Mr. President and your team for their efforts to realize this meeting today despite the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic.

I am very pleased and privileged to be here to present Somali's request for extension in the article-5 implementation deadline to be considered during the 19th Meeting of State Parties. Allow me to remind you that Somalia acceded to the Convention on 16 April 2012, and the Convention entered into force for Somalia on 1 October 2012. Despite complex contamination with a challenging environment, Somali has remained committed to fulfilling its obligations outlined under the article-5 by October 2022, And significant progress has been made towards achieving our goals, However, due to several challenges, Somalia has been unable to achieve its obligations in article-5 under the said deadline.

(Slide 2)As we seek extension for our article-5 obligations, Somalia continues to face great threats from landmines, explosive remnants of war (ERW) and an increased use of improvised explosive devices including anti-personnel mines of improvised nature. Minefields along the

border between Somalia and Ethiopia, unexploded ordnance that is abandoned across rural and urban areas, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) on main supply routes and urban areas continue to endanger the safety of the Somali civilian population, including preventing to access productive lands to maintain livelihoods. Another challenge is that continued insecurity has limited access of deminers to these mined areas.

Since January 2020, more than 85 civilians mostly children were killed and injured by landmines and unexploded ordnance in Somalia. IEDs continue to kill and maim indiscriminately to the civilian population about ten folds more than landmines and explosive ordnance combined. Explosive Ordnance poses a significant threat to the peace, stability and recovery of the country.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

The Federal Government of Somalia submitted its article-5 deadline extension request on 20 April 2021, after receiving comments and questions from the Committee, Somalia submitted a revised request 10 September 2021. Somalia is requesting a five year extension from 1 October 2022 to 1 October 2027.

I need to highlight the achievements in the original 10 years deadline of the convention.

Progress Made (slide 3)

The situation in Somalia remained very dynamic in the last 10 years, despite multifaceted challenges, the Somali government established a national mine action program in August 2013, to coordinate, regulate and manage its national mine action program. Earlier to quantify the contamination landmine impact survey (LIS) was carried out in North and East parts of Somalia (Somaliland and Puntland) resulting to identify 1,300 hazard areas, due to armed conflict the land impact survey (LIS) was not conducted in South and Central part of Somalia, only localized surveys were carried out. Clearance and explosive ordnance disposal, battle area clearance continued removing over 40,000 objects including a small number of landmines. As of 2021,

close to 1.5 million people were reached with Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) in Somalia.

(slide 4)

However, due to continued insecurity, that prevents demining organisations from reaching mined areas, a full understanding of the extent and nature of the Article 5 obligation in Somalia has been difficult to establish.

Remaining challenges (slide 5)

The dangers of landmines and explosive remnants of war remain to continue to pose a significant threat to the civilian population, despite efforts to contain, contamination remains. Somalia recognizes that ‘mines of an improvised nature’ pose a significant risk to the population. As of 2020, there are 122 confirmed minefields with 16km² area and about 74 suspected minefields are recorded. A further survey is required to provide further evidence on the exact nature and extent of contamination in Somalia and to understand the extent of mines of improvised nature in the country.

Circumstances impeding completion (Slide 6)

Based on stakeholder engagement during the preparation of the extension request, Somalia identified the following as major causes embedded completion of article-5 implementation in the original 10 years.

1. Insufficient information about the extent of the contamination
2. Insufficient information about the impact of the contamination
3. Limited access to contaminated areas by our teams because of security concerns
4. Limited access to contaminated areas to supervise our teams because of security concerns
5. Other types of contamination (such as IED) have had to take priority
6. Lack of training, lack of resources and lack of effective coordination and prioritization

Extension Period and Rationale. (Slide 7)

The Somali government is requesting a five-year extension of its deadline under Article of the Convention, from 1 October 2022 – 1 October 2027. The rationale for the period request is based on the current human, financial and technical resources available to implement Somalia's obligations under Article 5, as well as the current level of insecurity present in the country.

The Somali government reiterates its commitment to the convention, implementation of article-5, work towards the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan, however, due to challenges on ground concluding capacity limitation, resources and the requirement to further understand the problem Somali will need to request an extension beyond the aspirational date of 2025. Somalia will keep updating the state parties in its progress of implementation of the article-5 in the convention.

Planned Activities (Slide 8)

SEMA will continue to work with stakeholders on lifesaving mine action activities in accessible areas. With consultation of the mine action stakeholders Somalia has submitted a costed and timebound action plan with the extension request. The work plan includes two areas of focus:

- i) Building the national capacity of SEMA, and,
- ii) Continued implementation of land release activities in secure areas.

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During the extension period, SEMA will adopt a two-phase approach. Continue land release and capacity building until the deadline of October 2022, and a second phase that will cover the extension period from 1 October 2022 to 1 October 2027. SEMA plans to continue land release, risk education and capacity building activities during both phases.

During Phase 1 a resources mobilization plan and detailed budget for the implement activities in phase- two of the work plan will be developed and shared with the States Parties. Such a plan

must be strong to direct mine action but also flexible to adapt to the changing nature of work on the ground.

(Slide 10)

Ensuring Gender and Diversity is integral to the request. Gender and diversity will be integrated in the work plan and Somalia recognizes the value of the United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programming and work is under way for a national gender policy for mine action to be developed and shared during the phase one of the work plan.

Efforts to deliver Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) to at-risk groups in various platforms including digital risk education, radio broadcast and face to face sessions will continue during the implementation of the plan. EORE is integrated into the land release activities of Somalia's implementing partners., including gender teams to ensure inclusion. EORE will also be included in the detailed work plan for Phase 2.

Your excellencies,

In accordance with our extension request to accomplishing our obligation in the article-5 of the AP Mine Ban Convention, our focus will remain to scale up the mine action program in Somalia to clear mines to make it possible for affected communities to improve their livelihoods, allow unused roads and pasture land to be accessed without fear of landmines. I want to reiterate the commitment of the Somali government in the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan (OAP) and other frameworks.

On behalf of the Government of Somalia, I would like to thank the people and government of donor countries including the Government of Japan, United Kingdom, Norway, EU countries, Germany, United States and the United Nations for their contributions to the mine action program in Somalia. It is now critical more than ever to support the mine action program in Somalia, as Somalia is requesting an extension of the deadline in the article-5 obligation.

(Slide 11)

Let me to conclude my remarks to highly appreciate the unsung heroes, male and female in the field carrying out demining activities and risking their lives to save lives of others even during the times of the pandemic, also special thanks to their mine action entities including the HALO Trust, Norwegian People's Aid, Danish Demining Group, Mines Advisory Group, United Nations Development Program, and the United Nations Mine Action Service, contractors for their continued support which without their help the current achievement would not have been made. I would also like to thank the Committee on Article 5 for their engagement throughout the process and also the Implementation Support Unit for all their assistance during the Article 5 process.

(slide 12)

We would like to encourage all of your continued support and we look forward to building our existing partnerships and starting new partnerships on our way forward to a mine-free Somalia.

Thank you!