



ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Statement on Article 5 Implementation

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Intersessional Meeting of States Parties

Geneva, 22-24 June 2021

At the outset, the ICRC commends the Committee on Article 5 Implementation and the Convention's Implementation Support Unit for its work with diligence and thoroughness, despite the various challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ICRC wishes to take this opportunity to provide some general thoughts and reflections on accelerating the implementation of mine clearance and risk education obligations under Article 5 of the Convention by all concerned States Parties.

Today 32 States Parties remain contaminated by anti-personnel mines, and several of them are not fully on track in implementing mine clearance obligations. According to two recently published discussion papers on *Implementation of Article 5 of the Mine Ban Treaty* and on *Analysis of (81) Article 5 Extensions*, some of these States Parties have not conducted any clearance activities for years, or established the baselines of contamination through survey. At least five affected States Parties did not provide updates through Article 7 reporting for two or more consecutive years.

The year 2020 was the first year to implement new measures in the Oslo Action Plan to enhance implementation of clearance and mine risk education obligations. Eight States Parties have submitted requests for extension. While we take positive note that the majority (6) of them submitted multiyear work plans for the period of the extension in accordance with Action #23 of the Oslo Action Plan, only half (4) of them provided information on plans to implement mine risk education during the extension period as required by Action #24, and only 2 States submitted their requests in a timely fashion in accordance with the extension request process per decisions and recommendations adopted at the 7th and 12th meetings of the States Parties. Furthermore, we note with regret that one State Party failed to request

an extension before its clearance deadline and is in non-compliance with Article 5(3) of the Convention until this day.

Twenty-two years after the Convention's entry into force, this is not a satisfactory level of implementation and calls for urgent, concerted action by affected States and States Parties and organisations in a position to assist them. Notably, the following measures, including those adopted in the Oslo Action Plan, should in the ICRC's view be implemented vigorously:

Firstly, States Parties reporting a high number of Suspected Hazardous Area pending survey should establish evidence-based baseline for implementation no later than by the 19th Meeting of the State Parties in November this year, as required by Action# 18 of the Oslo Action Plan;

Secondly, affected States Parties should ensure that all obligations of the Convention apply to contamination by all types of anti-personnel mines, be they industrially manufactured or of an improvised nature, as per Action# 21 of the Oslo Action Plan;

Thirdly, extension requests should be submitted in a timely manner in accordance with the process established at previous meetings of the States Parties, including by providing detailed, costed, multi-year plans for both clearance and mine risk reduction and education activities as required by Actions #23 and #24 of the Oslo Action Plan. We appreciate the presentation of their extension requests by 5 States Parties today, and call on those 3 States that are due to submit requests for extension this year but have not yet done so to take actions accordingly without delay;

Fourthly, pending completion of mine clearance, States Parties should ensure that a national capacity is in place to deliver mine risk education and reduction, and that these programmes are context-specific and take into account gender, age, disability, and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities;

Fifthly, resources and political attention, both national and international, must be sustained and in some instances increased, in light of the implementation challenges intensified by the pandemic. Increased national ownership as well as in-country coordination between national mine action authorities, donors and international and national demining actors must be strengthened. This would also hopefully minimize the need for additional extension requests in the future;

Lastly, new measures notably in Actions #48 and #49 of the Oslo Action Plan have been made available for States Parties to tackle with compliance issues regarding core obligations under the Convention. We call on affected States Parties that have not submitted their Article 7 Reports, including those that have not done so in two or more consecutive years, to report

on progress of implementation as soon as possible. The State Party in non-compliance with Article 5(3) must submit a request for extension without further delay.

To conclude, the Oslo Action Plan represents a collective undertaking by States Parties and provides important guidance to the Convention's implementation. In our view, it must be scrupulously implemented in order for the Convention's community to hold to the commitment towards achieving the goal of a world free of anti-personnel mines. On its part, the ICRC, together with the broader International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, stand ready to support concerned States Parties and the Convention's machinery in stepping up efforts to ensure effective implementation of mine clearance and risk education obligations.

Thank you.