

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION (Belgium, Norway, Sri Lanka and Zambia (Chair))

Intersessional Meetings 22 – 24 June 2021

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 5 BY COLOMBIA

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

1. Colombia reported that in 2020 it released 181 “poligons” measuring 1,280,791 square meters in 49 municipalities resulting in the destruction of 144 anti-personnel mines and 47 items of unexploded ordnance. Colombia reported that of the 1,280,791 square meters addressed a total of 86,891 square meters were cancelled through non-technical survey, 115,371 square meters were reduced through technical survey and 1,078, 529 square meters were addressed through clearance.
2. The Committee observed that the information provided by Colombia on progress in implementation allowed for comparability with that provided in its 2020 extension request. The Committee welcomed Colombia providing disaggregated information on progress in accordance with land release methodology employed, using the Guide to Reporting and in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) (Action #8, Action #22).

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

3. The Committee observed that Colombia reported clarity¹ concerning its remaining challenge (Action #18). Colombia reported that the remaining challenge as of 31 December 2020 includes 232 Confirmed Hazardous Area measuring 1,852,590 square meters and 187 Suspected Hazardous Areas measuring 1, 092,909 square meters. Colombia further noted that in the 135 zones that have been assigned with a total of 2,887 sectors remaining to be surveyed. The Committee observed that Colombia also reported on areas that are not assigned due to security.
4. The Committee welcomed Colombia reporting on its remaining challenge in a manner consistent with the IMAS by providing information disaggregated by suspected hazardous areas and confirmed hazardous areas (Action #22).
5. Action #18 of the Oslo Action Plan requests States that have not yet done so will identify the precise perimeter of mined areas, to the extent possible, and establish evidence based, accurate baselines of contamination based on information collected from all relevant sources, no later than by the Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties in 2021. **The Committee observed that Colombia was still in the process of identifying the precise perimeter of mined areas and would welcome updated information from Colombia on these efforts.**

¹ “Clarity” has been used when a State Party has provided a summary table of all remaining areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines according to regions, provinces and districts including the number of areas known to contain anti-personnel mines, the number of areas suspected to contain anti-personnel and the size of the areas.

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

6. The Committee recalled that Colombia's extension request submitted in 2020 contained a national evidence based and costed plan for clearance and survey for the period of 2020-2023 to complete survey and clearance in the 156 municipalities as follows: 194 areas measuring 1'023'879 square metres in 2020, 101 mine areas measuring 1'328'253 square metres in 2021, 140 mined areas measuring 950'263 square metres in 2022 and 32 mined areas measuring 31'804 square metres in 2023. The request also indicates that an additional 4'949'100 square metres will be addressed in areas pending non-technical survey.
7. Colombia reported to have a national mine action strategy in place for the period of 2020-2025. Colombia reported that in 2020 Colombia developed a national strategy for implementation which brings together three principal frameworks, the National Strategic Plan 2020-2025, the Operational Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2020-2025 and the extension request document presented to the States Parties in 2020.
8. The Committee observed that in 2020 the Government of Colombia allocated an annual financial commitment towards implementation of US \$1.4 million, an increase of 32% of its 2019 budget. The Committee further noted that Colombia had reported on financial contributions from its implementing partners and donors during the reporting period (Action #1). Colombia further reported that it finances the operation of its national armed forces totalling approximately USD \$46 million.
9. Colombia reported that its mine action activities are integrated into national and territorial policies, programmes and projects oriented toward peace building. Colombia reported that, in particular, mine action activities integrate into other national policies concerning National Parks, Program for the Return and Relocations of the Displaced Population, Land Restitution Programs, Development Programs with a Territorial Approach (PDET), National Comprehensive Substitution Program (PNIS) and Future Zones- Strategic Zones for Comprehensive Intervention (ZEI).
10. The Committee observed that Colombia had reported on its efforts to strengthen partnerships and integrate responses between mine action related activities and humanitarian response plans, peacebuilding, development or human rights plans, where relevant (Action #6).
11. The Committee observed that Colombia reported that during 2020 it made projections regarding the years in which each of the 419 remaining mined areas would be released. Colombia reported that this is as part of the operational monitoring methodology which includes monthly meetings with each accredited operators in Colombia to determine progress made and allow for regularly adjustments in the milestones. The Committee observed that Colombia provided an updated overview of expected progress in the period of 202-2025 reporting that in 2021 it is expected to release 84 mined areas measuring 459,890 square meters in the Departments of Antioquia, Bolívar, Caldas, Caquetá, Cauca, Huila, Santander, Sucre and Valle del Cauca (Action #20).
12. The Committee observed the Colombia reported on efforts to ensure that mine action efforts are centred on an approach that takes gender and the diverse needs into account, in particular those of the different ethnic groups in Colombia (Action #3).
13. Colombia reported that the humanitarian demining capacity of the armed forces of Colombia, which is funded by the government, is already addressing residual contamination and are the sustainable national capacity (Action #26).

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

14. Colombia reported on its efforts to ensure that its National Mine Action Standards reflect the latest methodologies in line with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) including through a review of National Mine Action Standards in 2020 (Action #5). Colombia reported that this review took place through a "Technical Council for Standardization" which includes all organization involved national and international organizations involved in humanitarian demining operations.
15. Colombia reported on its efforts to maintain an accurate and up-to-date information management system. In this regard, Colombia indicated that in 2020, progress was made in improving reporting tools such as the development of a dashboard which allows the monitoring of progress in operations (Action #9).
16. Colombia reported that the process of updating national technical standards, is an example of measures adopted to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of operations. Colombia reported that this will permit operations to be more dynamic and, with this, reduce the risk to the communities in affected areas (Action #27).

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

17. In considering Colombia's 2020 extension request, the Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties requested Colombia to submit updated information on several matters. The Committee welcomes the information provided by Colombia on a) progress made relative to the commitments contained in Colombia's Humanitarian Demining Plan b) update on assessment of the remaining challenges, c) adjusted milestones d) progress made relative to the development and adoption of land release standards and other efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency e) progress made in the establishment of a sustainable national capacity, f) changes in the security situation and how these changes positively or negatively affect implementation, g) progress made to strengthen the inclusive nature of Colombia's Mine Action Programme through the establishment of a humanitarian demining platform, h) information on how implementation efforts take into consideration the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities, i) updates regarding the development and implementation of a detailed, costed and multi-year plan for context-specific mine risk education and reduction in affected communities, including information on the methodologies used, the challenges faced and the results achieved, with information disaggregated by gender and age and j) Resource mobilisation efforts.
18. **The Committee observed the Colombia did not provide information in its Article 7 report on changes in the security situation and how these changes positively or negatively affect implementation. The Committee would welcome information in this regard.**

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

19. Colombia reported in detail on the actions it has taken to effectively exclude the population from mined areas, including mine risk education and reduction programmes (MRE/R) the methodologies used, challenges faced and results achieved disaggregated by gender and age (Action #32).
20. Colombia reported that MRE/R are integrated into ongoing survey, clearance and victim assistance activities (Action #28). Colombia reported on the different models for including in Mine Risk Education in situation of Emergencies, Mine Risk Education in the area of Education and Mine Risk Education within the framework of land release operations. Colombia further highlighted that Colombia employed two different mechanisms including a) traditional communication such as

through the use of tools to send mass communication such as the radio and b) new communication mediums including digital media through, for example, WhatsApp and Facebook.

21. Colombia reported that its Mine Risk Education Plan is detailed in its Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and implemented through annual plans which are developed, coordinated and monitored through a national MRE platform. Colombia reported that in 2020 Mine Risk Education was integrated within the strategy of strengthening Victim Association in Colombia (Action #29).

22. Colombia reported that MRE programmes are developed through an inclusive and evidence based approach with the MRE programme based on the characteristics, condition and the needs of the mine affected community. MRE operations take as their starting point the different needs and priorities of different groups of persons, such as those displaced by conflict and refugees, boys, girls women and the elderly as well as persons with disabilities and ethnic groups. Colombia reported that Law 1448 of 2011 obliges Colombia to consider gender and the diverse needs of affected communities in their implementation efforts (Action #30).

23. Colombia highlighted the different accredited partners that support MRE activities in Colombia including national capacities as well as other actors they plan to involve in MRE efforts such as youth groups (Action #31).

VII. Challenges in implementation (OAP Action #8)

24. The Committee observed that Colombia highlighted the following challenges to their implementation efforts.

- Restrictions on access persist due to the security;
- Illegal groups continue to employ improvised anti-personnel mines;
- Geographic challenges to arrive in mine affected areas;
- Operational costs; and
- The ongoing pandemic caused by COVID 19.