

GICHD remarks on APMBC article 5 extension request submitted by the Federal Government of Somalia

Intersessional meeting of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention June 2021

The GICHD would like to congratulate the Federal Government of Somalia on the submission of an Article 5 extension request of five years.

In the face of the significant and complex contamination that Somalia faces as a result of decades of conflict, security and access difficulties, and challenges to the mobilization of necessary resources, this request is a strong testament to Somalia's commitment towards full APMBC implementation.

The request provides significant details on the causes of contamination in the country and on prior demining efforts, particularly relating to survey. However, to fully assess the requested extension, more information would be necessary, for instance relating to the breakdown into suspected and confirmed hazardous areas of the total 125 contaminated areas reported in 2019 and on their specific locations.

The lack of accurate and comprehensive information on the extent and location of mined areas clearly constitutes a primary obstacle for Somalia to establish a detailed plan for the years ahead, which is compounded by the lack of access to some regions. The GICHD indeed notes that NTS activities are an essential component of Somalia's plans for the next five years. On these efforts, more details would be useful, in particular on:

- The areas in which NTS would be conducted, whether these include areas where NTS has been conducted in the past, whether any accessible areas are excluded from the survey and why.
- Available assets to conduct NTS, both directly owned and managed by SEMA and provided by operators active in the country.
- Estimated overall cost of the NTS, with an indication of expected/confirmed resources (both domestic and international).

Further information would also be useful on foreseen technical survey activities.

Given the key importance of determining the extent and location of contaminated areas, Somalia may want to consider submitting a revised extension request in two stages: the first, wholly dedicated to NTS/TS, with the acknowledgement that some areas are currently inaccessible for security reasons, that the situation in these may evolve over time, and that Somalia will update the APMBC States Parties on relevant developments.

As already foreseen, in this phase Somalia could also focus on capacity building to ensure the acquisition of necessary resources, and on EORE, to minimize to the extent possible the humanitarian impact of contamination.

After this phase, a final extension request could provide more accurate information on plans for clearance activities, their timeline, location, assets, foreseen cost, and required resources.

It is commendable that Somalia has reported on risk education efforts undertaken to date, and that a more detailed and structured EORE plan will be developed by SEMA as part of Phase 1 of its work plan. We encourage Somalia, in line with the OAP, to include information on at-risk groups, messaging, supporting materials, prioritisation of EORE interventions and budget. In accordance with action #29 of the Oslo Action Plan, Somalia should also provide additional information on how its mine risk education and risk education programmes are sensitive not only to age, but also to gender and disability, and take account of the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities.

Finally, the request underlines that, at the moment, SEMA is reliant on foreign financial resources, with a budget proposal for the Authority awaiting approval by the Ministry of Internal Security. In this regard, further information would be useful on the difference between expected costs and currently expected/confirmed financial resources, both domestic and international.

While recognizing that further information would be necessary for a proper assessment of this extension request, the GICHD again commends Somalia for engaging in a committed and constructive dialogue with the art. 5 Committee. We would also like to encourage further use of the mechanisms set in place by the APMBC to assist channeling international assistance to beneficiary countries, including the individualized approach. For its part, the GICHD reaffirms its commitment to providing support to Somalia's path towards completion of its clearance and EORE obligations.