

**Statement by the Chair of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation on the Analysis of the  
Request for extension submitted by Ecuador**

Mr. President (Chair),

The Committee noted with satisfaction that Ecuador had submitted its request in a timely manner and had engaged in a cooperative dialogue with the Committee.

- On 31 March 2022, Ecuador submitted to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation a request for extension of its 31 December 2022 deadline.
- On 15 June 2022, the Committee wrote to Ecuador requesting additional information and clarity on key areas of the request
- The Committee would like to thank the ICBL and the Mine Action Review for providing expert input which was instrumental for the engagement of the Committee with Ecuador.
- On 17 August 2022, Ecuador submitted a revised request for extension integrating some of the responses to the Committee's questions.
- Ecuador's request is for three years, until 31 December 2025

In analysing Ecuador's submission, I would like to share some key points on behalf of the Committee.

The request provides information on progress achieved over its last extension period and indicated that the remaining challenge totals 53 mined areas measuring 40,056 square meters estimated to contain a total of 2,941 anti-personnel mines including 27 confirmed hazardous areas measuring 32,535 square metres and 26 suspected hazardous areas measuring 7,521 square metres in the province of Zamora Chinchipe.

The Committee noted that Ecuador had provided information on progress and remaining challenge in accordance with International Mine Action Standards and encourage Ecuador to continue providing information in this manner.

The Committee, in noting that the 26 suspected hazardous areas do not have exact coordinates and that it will take some time to carry out survey to identify them, wrote to Ecuador to request additional information on a detailed plan to survey the remaining areas and a timeline to determine the exact location. Ecuador responded by indicating that it plans to carry out non-technical survey of suspected areas in 2023 and 2024 and provided a table with the breakdown of when it estimates that these areas will be addressed. The Committee noted the importance of Ecuador ensuring that survey efforts are carried out in accordance with IMAS and to continue seeking improved land release and certification techniques which could lead to Ecuador fulfilling its obligations in a shorter time frame.

The request highlights Ecuador's cooperation with Peru in the implementation of Article 5 on their common border. The Committee welcomes this cooperation as an important example of cooperation between two bordering mine affected States Parties.

The Committee further noted that Ecuador clearly highlighted the circumstances which impeded Ecuador from achieving completion by its extended deadline. Including the fact that during the period of 2020 and 2021 no humanitarian demining operations were carried out with the reassignment of resources to address the health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent financial crisis.

Concerning Ecuador's work plan. The request indicates annual milestones to be achieved during the extension period. The request indicates that operations will be carried out in six missions to the field

over a period of six months each year (June – December).

The Committee noted that given previous progress implementation and given Ecuador's estimation that suspected areas can be addressed through cancellation and reduction in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), Ecuador may find itself in a situation where it can proceed much faster than that suggested by the amount of time requested and in a more cost-effective manner.

The request indicates that areas to be addressed have been prioritized according to the impact of mines on the population and particularly the proximity of communities to mined areas. The request indicates that this approach allows Ecuador to return land to the affected communities and facilitate the potential for the socio-economic development of the country. The Committee noted the importance of Ecuador continuing to assess the situation and prioritizing its operation in accordance with the impact of mined areas on the population.

The Committee further noted the importance of Ecuador making use the full range of practical methods to rapidly, with a high level of confidence, release areas suspected of containing anti-personnel mines. The Committee added that doing so could benefit Ecuador in ensuring that the grave humanitarian, social and economic impacts outlined by Ecuador in its request are addressed as quickly as possible.

The request further indicates that a total of 94 mined areas totalling 220,524.95 square metres located in the provinces of Morona Santiago, Pastaza, and Zamora Chinchipe are in the process of quality control. In this regard, the Committee wrote to Ecuador to provide information on the reason for their late release and encouraging the provision of a clear calendar for their release during the extension period.

Ecuador indicated that quality control must be carried out in order to complete all phases of the humanitarian demining process. Ecuador further highlighted that the vegetation and terrain typical of the Amazonian tropical forest increases the time and resources necessary for implementation.

The Committee noted unfortunately that Ecuador did not provide a detailed plan for pending quality control operations and highlighted the importance of Ecuador providing such a plan as soon as possible including annual milestones, methodology to be employed and budget for the carrying out of quality control operations.

The request indicates that mine risk education (MRE) campaigns are planned based on studies and analysis of the behaviour of the population in mine affected areas, are delivered in both Spanish and Shuar languages and aim to train community leaders (union and teachers) to transmit MRE messages in their respective communities. The Committee noted the importance of Ecuador continuing to carry out MRE programmes in mine affected communities ensuring that they are context-specific and take into account gender and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities. The Committee further noted the importance of Ecuador reporting on the methodologies employed in this regard.

### **Concluding remarks**

In conclusion, in recalling that the implementation of Ecuador's national demining plan will be affected by new information from ongoing clearance and survey operations as well as the risk factors identified in the request, the Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from Ecuador submitting to the Committee by 30 April 2024, an updated detailed work plan for the remaining period covered by the extension.

The Committee noted that this work plan should contain information on progress made, an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, annual projections of which areas and what area would be dealt with during the remaining period covered by the request and a revised detailed budget.

The Committee noted that the plan presented by Ecuador is workable, lends itself well to be monitored, and states clearly which factors could affect the pace of implementation. The Committee also noted that the plans are contingent upon the findings of survey effort as well as challenges faced by Ecuador. In this regard, the Committee noted that the States Parties would benefit from Ecuador reporting annually, by 30 April, to the States Parties on the following:

- Progress made relative to the commitments contained in Ecuador's work plan and the results of survey and clearance efforts in a manner consistent with IMAS;
- The impact of survey and clearance outcomes and update on how additional clarity obtained may change Ecuador's assessment of the remaining implementation challenge and timeframe for implementation;
- The remaining challenge in a manner consistent with IMAS and disaggregated by suspected hazardous areas and confirmed hazardous areas and their respective sizes;
- Adjusted milestones, including information on the number of areas and amount of mined area to be addressed manually and how priorities have been established;
- Progress, methodologies employed, annual milestones and anticipated costs for quality control operations and progress in the handover of previously released land for the productive use of mine affected communities;
- Updates regarding the implementation of mine risk education and reduction efforts in affected communities, including information on the methodologies used, the challenges faced and the results achieved, with information disaggregated by gender and age;
- Resource mobilization efforts, external financing received and resource made available by the Government of Ecuador to support implementation efforts; and
- Information on how implementation efforts take into consideration the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boy and men and the needs and experiences of people in affected communities.

The Committee noted the importance of Ecuador keeping the States Parties regularly apprised of other pertinent developments regarding its implementation of Article 5 during the period covered by the request and other commitments made in the request at Intersessional Meetings, Meetings of the States Parties and Review Conferences as well as through Article 7 reports.