

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

Mr. President (Chair),

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

- On 22 April 2022, Guinea-Bissau submitted to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation a request for extension of its 31 December 2022 deadline. The Committee noted that while the extension request was submitted last, it is appreciative that Guinea-Bissau kept the committee informed of delays.
- The Committee would like to thank the ICBL and the HALO Trust for providing expert input which was instrumental for the engagement of the Committee with Guinea-Bissau.
- On 15 June 2022, the Committee wrote to Guinea-Bissau requesting additional information and clarity on key areas of the request.
- On 4 August 2022, Guinea-Bissau submitted to the Committee additional clarification in response to the Committee's questions.

- Guinea-Bissau's request is for 24 months, until 31 December 2024.

In analysing Guinea-Bissau submission, I would like to share some key points on behalf of the Committee.

Progress Made

As many of you are aware, Guinea-Bissau had declared completion but has now identified previously unknown contamination and recent accidents have alerted Guinea-Bissau to a remaining threat.

The request indicates that during the previous extension period, the CAAMI engaged with several stakeholders including the HALO Trust, HUMAID, the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and that following dialogue with partners in the development of the extension request, a number of shortcomings related to the capacity of the CAAMI to fulfil its mandate were identified and form the basis of the workplan for the extension period. The Committee noted the importance of the efforts put forth by CAAMI to forge partnership with international experts.

The request recalls that investigations and population reports have identified nine confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) measuring 1,093,840 square metres, 43 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) of an unknown area, five battle areas clearance tasks measuring 402,304 square metres and three spot clearance tasks have been identified.

However, as indicated in the request, systematic methodology were not employed in gathering this information and there is a need to undertake a national evidence-based survey compliant with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).

The Committee welcomed Guinea-Bissau providing information on its remaining challenge in a manner disaggregated by 'suspected hazardous areas' and 'confirmed hazardous areas' and their relative size, as well as by the type of contamination. The Committee further noted Guinea-Bissau's commitment to carry out survey activities, in line with IMAS, to identify the precise perimeter of mined areas, to the

extent possible, and establish an evidence-based, accurate baseline of contamination as soon as possible.

Guinea-Bissau has clearly highlighted the circumstances which impeded Guinea-Bissau from achieving its deadline including the dissolving of the national programme following the declaration of completion and a lack of financial and technical means.

Concerning Guinea-Bissau's work plan.

Guinea-Bissau's request is for 24 months, until 31 December 2024 and contains clear annual milestones for implementation. Within this time frame some of the key activities Guinea-Bissau plans to carry out include:

- a. **The** Development of an information management system and development of national standards in line with IMAS,
- b. Resumption of explosive ordnance risk education and reduction (EORE) activities
- c. Implementation of the non-technical survey at national level,
- d. Implementation of the emergency spot task clearance and marking,
- e. Definition of the residual risk management strategy:
- f. Initiation of clearance operations

The request further indicates that there is a need to secure substantial international assistance and includes a detailed budget for implementation.

The Committee also noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau ensuring that prioritization is based on an understanding of the socio-economic impact of contamination to ensure the most appropriate allocation of resources. The Committee further noted that completion of Article 5 implementation during the requested extension period has the potential of making a significant contribution to improving human safety and socio-economic conditions in affected areas in Guinea-Bissau.

The Committee considers Guinea-Bissau's approach to be sensible in light of the need to collect additional information on contamination.

Concluding remarks

In conclusion, in recalling that the implementation of Guinea-Bissau's national demining plan will be affected by the level of national and international funding, new information from survey operations as well as the risk factors identified in the request, the Committee noted the commitment of Guinea-Bissau to submit a subsequent extension request to the Committee by 31 March 2024 once it has acquired a clearer understanding of the extent of the challenge.

The Committee noted that the subsequent request should include, amongst other, a work plan containing 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 areas would be dealt with during the remaining period covered by the request, plans for context-specific mine risk education and reduction programmes and a revised detailed budget.

The Committee noted that the States Parties would benefit from Guinea-Bissau reporting annually, by 30 April, to the States Parties on the following:

- Progress made relative to the commitments contained in Guinea-Bissau'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 how additional clarity obtained may change

Guinea-Bissau'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;
- Information on progress in building the capacity of CAAMI, including the establishment of an information management system, the development of national mine action standards in accordance with IMAS, and preparations for survey and clearance activities;
- Adjusted milestones, including information on the number of mined areas and amount of area to be addressed manually and how priorities have been established;
- 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 Guinea-Bissau 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, in addition to Guinea-Bissau reporting to the States Parties as noted above, of 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.