

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

Mr. President (Chair),

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

- On 31 March 2022, Thailand submitted to the Committee a request for extension of its 31 October 2023 deadline.
- The Committee would like to thank the ICBL, GICHD and the Mine Action Review for providing expert input which was instrumental for the engagement of the Committee with Thailand.
- On 15 June 2022, the Committee wrote to Thailand requesting additional information and clarity on key areas of the request.
- On 11 August 2022, Thailand submitted to the Committee additional clarification in response to the Committee's questions.

- Thailand's request is for an additional three years and two months, until 31 December 2026.

The request includes information on the progress made by Thailand over the course of its last extension period as well as the remaining challenge which includes totals 36,968,469 square metres, including 2,988,878 square metres of SHAs and 19,665,722 square metres of CHAs. The request also indicates that of this total, 14,313,869 square metres is located in Areas to be demarcated.

The Committee noted the Thailand has provided information on progress and the remaining challenge in accordance with IMAS and encourages Thailand to continue to do so in the future.

The request further indicates that contamination along the border of Thailand and Cambodia includes the majority of the remaining contaminated areas and has presented the greatest challenges during the final stages. The request further indicated that after several unsuccessful attempts to access the areas on the border, TMAC decided to suspend the demining operations in these provinces to prevent any misunderstandings. The Committee welcomes the efforts by Thailand to cooperate with its neighbors to ensure that implementation of its commitments under the Convention.

Thailand highlighted quite clearly the circumstances which impeded Thailand from achieving its deadline including (a) high level of contamination and challenging geographical landscape, (b) the COVID-19 pandemic, and (c) access to the mine contaminated areas along the borders.

The request includes information on the socioeconomic impact of mines in Thailand. The Committee noted that completion of Article 5 implementation during the requested extension period had the potential of making a significant contribution to improving human safety and socio-economic conditions in Thailand.

Concerning Thailand's work plan. The request includes a workplan for the extension period with annual milestones for completion of Thailand's Article 5 obligations.

Also concerning Thailand's work plan we noted the importance of Thailand continuing the "Pilot Project on Demining Cooperation along the Border of Thailand and Cambodia" with the project awaiting agreement on selected areas from both the Thailand Mine Action Centre (TMAC) and the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) as well as endorsement from the General Border Committee (GBC). The Committee noted the importance of the pilot project to continue strengthening

cooperation between Thailand and Cambodia regarding mine clearance operations and welcomes further information on the projected steps and timeline for endorsement and approval.

Furthermore, the work plan includes a four-step plan to enable mine clearance along the Thai-Cambodian border which indicates a number of the key entities including the Thai-Cambodian Regional Border Committee, the Thailand-Cambodia General Border Committee and the Thai-Cambodia Joint Commission on Demarcation for Land Boundary. The request indicates that the Thailand-Cambodia Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation (JC) will serve as a support mechanism. The work plan also includes a multi-level framework for strengthening bilateral and multi-lateral relations during the three-year work plan, including, i) enhancing international cooperation at all levels, ii) a multi-lateral framework, and iii) strengthening community engagement. The Committee noted the importance of the Cooperation between Cambodia and Thailand and the importance of Thailand providing regular updates on the outcomes of coordination activities and the implementation of the multi-level framework in support of joint demining activities.

The workplan includes continued emphasis on MRE and the employment of warning signs. The Committee wrote to Thailand requesting additional information on a detailed, costed and multi-year mine risk education and reduction workplan and budget which is sensitive to age, gender and disability and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities and highlighting that the request would also benefit from consideration of a joint approach to deliver mine risk education and reduction efforts in border areas. Thailand responded by indicating that the TMAC Mine Risk Education Centre orients each Humanitarian Mine Action Unit at the beginning of each fiscal year and that each of these Units, in their area of operation, builds a network of relevant authorities, including village health volunteers and community leaders that will also use traditional and social media as communication channels on mine risk issues. The Committee noted that Thailand had included a workplan for MRE for the period 2022-2023 and encourages Thailand providing annual updates to this plan.

Concluding remarks

In conclusion, in recalling that the implementation of Thailand's national demining plan may be affected by outcomes from the process of border coordination activities and the implementation of the multi-level framework in support of joint demining activities, as well as potential reduction in funding the Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from Thailand 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 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 by which organisation, and a revised detailed budget.

The Committee noted that the plan presented by Thailand is workable and lends itself well to be monitored and states clearly those factors that could affect progress in implementation. The Committee noted that the plan is contingent upon the result of negotiations on access to areas to be demarcated. In this regard, the Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from Thailand reporting annually, by 30 April, to the States Parties on the following:

- Progress made relative to the commitments contained in Thailand'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 Thailand's assessment of the remaining implementation challenge and timeframe for implementation;
- Adjusted milestones, including information on the number of areas and amount of mined area to

be addressed manually and how priorities have been established;

- Updates on the proposed "Pilot Project on Demining Cooperation along the Border of Thailand and Cambodia" including information on projected steps and timeline for endorsement and approval;
- Updates on the outcomes of border coordination activities and the implementation of the multi-level framework in support of joint demining activities;
- 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 mobilisation efforts and external financing received and resources made available by the government of Thailand to support implementation efforts, including projected gaps in funding.
- 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 Thailand reporting to the States Parties as noted above, of keeping the States Parties regularly apprised of other pertinent developments regarding the 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 its Article 7 reports.

Finally, I would like to say that the cooperation of two States Parties on clearance of their common border is critical and that setting aside delimitation and demarcation to achieve this task as soon as possible is critical for our Convention.

17. The workplan includes a proposal for the continuation of the "Pilot Project on Demining Cooperation along the Border of Thailand and Cambodia" with the project awaiting agreement on selected areas from both TMAC and CMAC and endorsement from the General Border Committee (GBC). The Committee noted the importance of the pilot project to continue strengthening cooperation between Thailand and Cambodia regarding mine clearance operations and welcomes further information on the projected steps and timeline for endorsement and approval.

18. The work plan includes a four-step plan to enable mine clearance along the Thai-Cambodian border; i) Coordination with Cambodia at local or operational levels through the Office of Border coordination, ii) the Thai - Cambodian Regional Border Committee (RBC), iii) the Thailand – Cambodia General Border Committee (GBC), and iv) the Thai-Cambodian Joint Commission on Demarcation for Land Boundary (JBC). The request indicates that while cooperation between Thailand and Cambodia on humanitarian demining in ADs is to be discussed in detail and pushed forward within the RBC and GBC frameworks, the Thailand-Cambodia Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation (JC) will serve as a support mechanism. The work plan also includes a multi-level framework for strengthening bilateral and multi-lateral relations during the three-year work plan, including, i) enhancing international cooperation at all levels, ii) a multi-lateral framework, and iii) strengthening community engagement. The Committee noted the importance of Thailand providing regular updates on the outcomes of coordination activities and the implementation of the multi-level framework in support of joint demining activities.

The Committee noted the importance of Thailand continuing to carry out mine risk education

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 Thailand reporting on the methodologies employed in this regard.

19. The Committee wrote to Thailand to request additional information on the provision for a sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas discovered following completion. Thailand responded by indicating that once Thailand becomes “mine-free”, TMAC has the intention to transform the centre into a demining training centre, in order to share its know-how in mine operations. Thailand indicated that depending on the situation the size of TMAC will be reduced that the personnel will continue maintaining their networks with relevant agencies in the country, such as the military and the border patrol police, in case new mines are identified. The Committee would welcome additional information from Thailand on its efforts to develop a sustainable national capacity.