

Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

22 September 2022

Original: English

Twentieth Meeting

Geneva, 21-25 November 2022

Item 12 of the provisional agenda

Consideration of requests submitted under Article 5

Analysis of the request submitted by Guinea-Bissau for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention

Submitted by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation (Belgium, France, Iraq and Sri Lanka)

1. Guinea-Bissau ratified the Convention on 22 May 2001. The Convention entered into force for Guinea-Bissau on 1 November 2001. In its initial transparency report submitted on 19 June 2002, Guinea-Bissau reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Guinea-Bissau is obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 November 2011. Guinea-Bissau, believing that ongoing survey work may produce new information that may suggest that compliance by that date would not be possible, submitted, on 8 September 2010, to the President of the Second Review Conference, a request for an extension of its deadline. The Tenth Meeting of the States Parties agreed unanimously to grant the request for a period of two months, until 1 January 2012.

2. On 5 December 2012, Guinea-Bissau reported to the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties (12MSP) that it had fulfilled its obligation under Article 5 of the Convention before its 1 January 2012 deadline. Subsequently, on 11 August 2021 Guinea-Bissau submitted a request for an extended deadline to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation (“the Committee”). The request highlighted that Guinea-Bissau had discovered previously unknown mined areas. Guinea-Bissau’s request was for an extended deadline until 31 December 2022. The Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties (19MSP) agreed unanimously to grant the request for extension.

3. In granting the request, the Meeting highlighted in its decision that, while it is unfortunate that Guinea-Bissau, having declared completion of its Article 5 obligations under the Convention, has discovered previously unknown mined areas under its jurisdiction or control, the Meeting welcomed Guinea-Bissau’s adherence with the decision of the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties on how to address such situations. In granting the request, the Meeting also welcomed the fact that Guinea-Bissau is requesting only the period of time necessary to gather and assess data on landmine contamination and other relevant information with a view to develop a meaningful forward-looking plan based on this information. In this regard, the Meeting noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau ensuring that survey activities take into account best practices in a manner consistent with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). The Meeting further noted Guinea-Bissau’s commitment to submit a subsequent request by 31 March 2022 containing plans based on a clearer understanding of the extent of the challenge and which project with greater certainty the amount of time that will be required to complete Article 5 implementation.



4. On 22 April 2022, Guinea-Bissau submitted to the Committee a request for extension of its 31 December 2022 deadline. 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. The Committee noted that Guinea-Bissau had submitted the request in accordance with the process established by the States Parties and has engaged in cooperative dialogue with the Committee on matters related to the extension request.

5. As with the previous request, the request indicates that as a result of investigations carried out by Humanitarian Aid in Guinea-Bissau (HUMAID), a national non-governmental organisation, and through population reports 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. The request also indicates that, despite the information available, the assessment conducted in 2014 by HUMAID did not follow a systematic methodology and that a national evidence-based survey compliant with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) is required. The request further indicates that based on the results current figures will be adjusted.

6. The Committee noted that Guinea-Bissau reported on its remaining challenge in a manner consistent with IMAS and notes the importance of Guinea-Bissau continuing to provide 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.

7. The request indicates that, while the previous request indicated that 40 people have fallen victims to mines and other explosive ordnance since declaring completion, following the gathering and review of available information it was determined that a total of 13 accidents claimed 73 victims (one woman, 19 boys, four men and 49 unknown). The request indicates that activities will be prioritized to reach the maximum efficiency in terms of risks, population's safety, and operational efficiency. The Committee wrote to Guinea-Bissau to request additional socio-economic impact information. Guinea-Bissau responded by indicating that no recent investigation on the socio-economic impact of contamination has been conducted and referred to an impact survey carried out in 2008 which highlighted that 81% of the communities affected by landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) were "compact villages relying on small-scale agriculture for survival. Although the overall scale of contamination and impact [was] limited, there [was] evidence from the survey that clearance will ameliorate currently blocked or compromised access to agricultural and pastureland for almost half of these communities." Guinea-Bissau also indicated that it is expected that mines and explosive ordnance will continue to hamper access of the affected population to individual and collective socio-economic opportunities. Guinea-Bissau further responded by highlighting that socio-economic criteria would be integrated into the prioritization process that will be developed (e.g., blockage of arable lands) to guide the allocation of resources and prioritize survey and clearance efforts. Guinea-Bissau further indicated that information on the socio-economic impact of mines will also be integrated into the non-technical survey questionnaires and post-clearance impact assessment.

8. The Committee noted the provision of information on victims of mines in a manner disaggregated by gender and age and encourages Guinea-Bissau to provide additional information on victims disaggregated by injured and killed. The Committee encourages Guinea-Bissau to continue reporting on the socio-economic impact of contamination. 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.

9. As in the previous request, the request indicates that the Government of Guinea-Bissau established in early 2001 a National Humanitarian Mine Action Programme (PAAMI) and the National Mine Action Coordination Centre (CAAMI) which is mandated to plan and coordinate all mine action and mobilise resources for the implementation of the national mine action programme. The request further indicates that CAAMI faces a number of challenges, particularly lack of funding, which affects all areas of implementation.

10. 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.

11. As noted, Guinea-Bissau's request is for 24 months, until 31 December 2024. The request indicates the following annual milestones to be achieved during the extension period:

(a) 2022: Development of an information management system, development of national standards in line with IMAS, preparations of the non-technical survey, preparation for technical activities (technical survey, marking and clearance), resuming explosive ordnance risk education and reduction (EORE) activities and, fundraising for the period 2022/2024;

(b) 2023: Implementation of the non-technical survey at national level, implementation of the emergency spot task clearance and marking, implementation of the EORE activities, reinforcement of the capacities of the CAAMI and national operators, definition of the residual risk management strategy;

(c) 2024: initiation of clearance operations, continuation of emergency spot task clearance and marking, continuation of EORE activities, continue reinforcement of the capacities of the CAAMI and national operators, continued definition of a residual risk management strategy.

12. The request indicates that the tasks and activities will be prioritized to reach the maximum efficiency in terms of risks, population's safety and operational efficiency and will be framed by strong quality management, monitoring and evaluation, and information systems relying on accreditation, quality assurance and quality control. The request also indicates that Guinea-Bissau plans to have three operational bases, one in each province considering the driving time between provinces and work in remote areas. The request further indicates that Guinea-Bissau will continue reporting on the hazardous areas and progress and challenges on land release in accordance with the article 7 obligations of the Convention. The Committee noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau providing information on progress in a matter disaggregated by area cancelled through non-technical survey, area reduced through technical survey and area cleared.

13. The Committee noted that the request contains a detailed work plan and annual milestones and recognizes the importance of Guinea-Bissau's efforts to build its capacity to address known contamination and acquire a clear understand of contamination through survey efforts. The Committee further noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau's effort to develop a residual risk management strategy to ensure that Guinea-Bissau has the capacity to address any previously unknown mined areas identified following Guinea-Bissau declaring completion of its Article 5 obligations.

14. The request indicates threats that may affect the plan including a) access to the field hampered (e.g. rainy season), b) lack of funding c) misinformation regarding remaining needs, especially with regards to explosive remnants of war d) competition for limited funding across the region, e) inconsistent, incomplete, missing data, f) political instability, and g) possible turn-over in the direction and staffing of the CAAMI. The request further indicates that the funding of the preparatory activities in the second half of 2022 is a prerequisite for the implementation of 2022-2023 activities and, as such, Guinea-Bissau is urgently seeking international assistance on this matter.

15. The Committee wrote to Guinea-Bissau to request an update on progress in implementation of the activities scheduled to take place in 2022. Guinea-Bissau responded by indicating that progress has been made since the extension request was submitted in April 2022 including participation in the individualised approach during the Convention's Intersessional Meetings and outreach to several stakeholders who expressed their interest in supporting Guinea-Bissau. Guinea-Bissau further indicated that collaboration with MAG is ongoing and that MAG had acquired some funding from Norway to support Guinea-Bissau which will contribute to progress in the second semester of 2022. Guinea-Bissau further indicated that the level of current funding is inferior to the estimated budget proposed in the extension request for the period of 2022-2024. Guinea-Bissau further reported that if the activities planned in 2022 are affected there will be an impact on subsequent phases. The Committee noted the efforts carried out by Guinea-Bissau and welcomed Guinea-Bissau taking advantage of the Individualised Approach to disseminate its challenges and plans for implementation.

16. The request indicates that Guinea-Bissau will aim to promote, at all stages of its programme, gender and diversity inclusion. The request indicates that the CAAMI will require operators to consider gender and diversity in establishing their operational teams. The Committee wrote to Guinea-Bissau to request additional information on how the national mine action authority plans to incorporate gender and diversity, including in beneficiary engagement and to achieve project impact, beyond staffing of the CAAMI. Guinea-Bissau responded by indicating that it intends to have a broader integration of gender and diversity in its programme to ensure that the needs and perspectives of all groups are considered at all stages, and that the standards, national strategy, workplans and activities are tailored to be gender and diversity sensitive. Guinea-Bissau further indicated that it would look for a partner to conduct a gender and diversity analysis at the latest in the first quarter 2023 to provide concrete recommendations for enhancing consideration of gender and diversity aspects into programming and implementation and ensure that they are properly monitored and evaluated. Guinea-Bissau indicated that one key objective is to gain an understanding of the different groups to be considered at a community level, how to access them, how they are differently affected by explosive ordnance, and what the positive and negative consequences of mine action activities can have on them. The Committee noted the commitment of Guinea-Bissau to ensure that 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 further noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau reporting on these efforts.

17. The request indicates that after declaring completion in 2012, funding for mine action activities from international stakeholders ceased. The request indicates that, since this time, an estimated 40'000 US dollars (USD) is provided from the government to the CAAMI on an annual basis. The request indicates that implementation of the work plan is estimated to total 5 688 000 USD and included a detailed budget for implementation. The request further indicates that there is a need to secure substantial international assistance to implement the plan and that any delay in receiving this assistance will delay implementation accordingly. The request further indicates that the budget forecasted for 2024 is subject to adjustment in line with the results of non-technical survey. The Committee acknowledged the commitment of the government of Guinea-Bissau to its demining program. The Committee further noted the requirement for increased national and international support to implement the work plan.

18. The request indicates that the CAAMI will undertake significant efforts to increase the government's contribution to the fulfilment of Guinea-Bissau's Article 5 obligations and to attract external financing including by a) strengthening partnerships with national and international partners, b) raise awareness and interest of the international community concerning the situation in Guinea-Bissau, c) raise donor confidence on the quality and efficiency of the planned intervention, and d) reactivate the national council for humanitarian demining gathering ministries, international organizations, national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The request further indicates that it will submit quarterly updates to key external stakeholders on the progress and challenges against the work plan.

19. The Committee wrote to Guinea-Bissau to request additional information on efforts to reach out to donors as well as to organisations to support the implementation of the work plan. Guinea-Bissau responded by indicating that as part of the development of its capacities, the CAAMI is going to be assisted by MAG in developing a resource mobilization strategy involving key stakeholder mapping in-country and at the regional level for visibility, funding, and advocacy. Guinea-Bissau further highlighted that, at national level CAAMI intends to engage proactively with the Ministry of Defence and advocate for an increase in the contribution of the government to the mine action sector, with a target of at least 25 percent of the annual budget proposed in the extension request to be covered by the government of Guinea-Bissau. Guinea-Bissau further indicate that it aims to organise a resource mobilisation workshop in Bissau with the support of the ISU and secure support from organisation such as the GICHD and others to support its capacity building efforts. The Committee welcomes Guinea-Bissau's resource mobilization efforts and encourages Guinea-Bissau to continue reporting on progress in this regard.

20. The Committee noted the information provided in the request and in response to the Committee's questions. 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.

21. The Committee noted that the plan presented by Guinea-Bissau 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 level and timeliness of international support, results of survey as well as challenges faced by Guinea-Bissau. In this regard, the Committee noted that the States Parties would benefit from Guinea-Bissau reporting annually, by 30 April, to the States Parties on the following:

- i. 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 in accordance with the land release methodology employed, (i.e. cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey, and cleared through clearance);
- ii. 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;
- iii. The remaining challenge in a manner consistent with IMAS and disaggregated by suspected hazardous areas and confirmed hazardous areas and their respective sizes;
- iv. 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;
- v. Adjusted milestones, including information on the number of mined areas and amount of area to be addressed manually and how priorities have been established;
- vi. 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;

- vii. Resource mobilization efforts, external financing received and resource made available by the Government of Guinea-Bissau to support implementation efforts; and
- viii. 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.

22. 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 using the Guide for Reporting.
