

ICBL intervention on Art. 5 extension request process

Intersessional meeting to the Mine Ban Treaty, 20-22 June 2022, Geneva

Thank you Chair,

We want to thank you and the Committee for all your work for and at this meeting, and we thank all States who provided comments on their progress and challenges this week in fulfilling their Art. 5 obligation.

As we have said previously on numerous occasions, the ICBL remains highly disturbed by the state of implementation of Art. 5, in particular the prolonged, repeated and extensive delays in clearance by many States Parties, and the lack of compliance with past extension decisions and with the Oslo Action Plan commitments.

Delays in clearance result in ongoing human suffering and the devastation of human lives.

According to the Landmine Monitor reporting, three years away from the States Parties' aspirational completion goal of 2025, less than a handful of states seem to be on target to meet their current deadlines on or before 2025.

An alarmingly high number of States Parties have failed to honor their obligation to clear land "*as soon as possible*" and majority of affected States Parties, including those with small to medium amounts of contamination, continue to miss their Art. 5 deadlines and request further extensions.

Something that was meant to be an exception - for those with massive contamination and /or access challenges - has become a norm.

Many of extension requests submitted to date, including those reviewed this week, lack essential elements such as detailed and costed workplans, as required by the Oslo Action Plan's Action #23. Granting extensions based on incomplete requests disregards States Parties' commitments from Oslo and contributes to prolonged and repeated delays in the implementation of Article 5.

If current trends continue, many States Parties will not have completed their clearance for many more years or even decades to come. This would undermine the credibility of the treaty and its very purpose "*to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by antipersonnel mines.*"

The ICBL recognizes the intensive work undertaken by the Committee on Art. 5 Implementation and the ISU over the past 15 years. In particular, we welcome the new commitment of the Art. 5 Committee adopted at the 19MSP last year "*to continue strengthening the Article 5 extension request process and the adherence to the relevant actions of the Oslo Action Plan, including by drawing on input from all relevant stakeholders.*"

We are very pleased that this topic was included on the agenda of this intersessional meetings, which were intended to provide space for informal discussions of key issues facing the convention.

We thank the Committee on Art.5 for all its efforts undertaken so far aimed at strengthening the current extension request process and we look forward to further steps in this regard.

We hope this new effort will lead to a strategic re-thinking and re-adjustment of the current extension request process, that was last reflected on ten years ago. The ICBL looks forward to substantial discussion on this soon, with inclusion of all relevant stakeholders, including expert and

civil society organizations. We hope such consultations would facilitate reflections of the Article 5 Committee and lead to change of practice and adoption of new recommendations on the extension request process at the 20MSP. Strengthening the extension process should serve States requesting extensions by supporting better requests that would more easily attract funding and be more likely to be implemented. It is vital this strategic rethinking leads to enhanced adherence to the Oslo Action Plan and ultimately to advancing timely completion of Art. 5 obligations.

We look forward to working closely on this with the Chair and the Committee, and all states and partners.

It is never too late to do all we can.

Meanwhile I encourage you to look up the ICBL discussion paper entitled *“Completion in 2025? In 2030? In Our Lifetime?”* that presents key findings and concerns related to Art. 5 implementation, and offers initial suggestions for action, that you will find on the table outside the room.

Thank you.