



SENEGAL'S MINE ACTION PROGRAMME: OVERVIEW OF REMAINING CHALLENGES AND NEEDS INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACH MEETING

FINAL REPORT
9 November 2023

I. INTRODUCTION AND PARTICIPANTS

On 21 June 2023, Senegal and the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, with the support of the Implementation Support Unit, invited cooperation partners, representatives of civil society and mine action operators to engage in an open and frank discussion regarding Senegal's needs and challenges in implementing its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention, focusing in particular on Senegal's current work plan and implementation efforts to complete its mine clearance commitments by 2026.

In preparation for the meeting, participants received a package which included an agenda and background information on the status of Senegal's implementation of Article 5 of the Convention. In addition, Senegal's 2023-2025 workplan was distributed at the meeting. These documents will be made available on Senegal's country page of the Convention website¹.

The meeting was held in a hybrid format on the margins of the 19-21 June 2023 Intersessional Meetings. Thanks to a contribution from Canada interpretation in English and French was provided.

II. PARTICIPATION

States: Algeria, France, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Japan, Mozambique, Netherlands, Nigeria, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and Thailand.

Organisations: European Union, GICHD, HAMAP-Humanitaire, Humanity & Inclusion, ICBL, MAG, Mine Action Review and UNDP.

III. WELCOME REMARKS

Following welcome remarks and an overview of the Individualized Approach provided by **Ms Athikarn Bell DILOGWATHANA**, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations Office and other international organisations in Geneva and Chair of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance, **H.E. Coly SECK, Ambassador of Senegal to the United Nations in Geneva** delivered opening remarks.

¹ <https://www.apminebanconvention.org/en/membership/senegal/>

In his remarks, Ambassador SECK thanked all those who made the Individualized Approach meeting possible, in particular Thailand, as the Committee Chair, the ISU and the partners which have accompanied Senegal's mine action programme in Casamance for years. He highlighted that the elimination of the threat of mines and explosive remnants of war remains a major objective for the Government of Senegal.

Ambassador SECK recalled that Senegal has been facing an armed crisis since 1982 in Casamance resulting in the contamination by anti-personnel mine of an area of nearly three million square metres (3,000,000 m²), impacting the socio-economic development of the region. With 862 mine victims, mines continue to create a psychosis and insecurity among the populations in Casamance.

The commitment of Senegal resulted in 1998 in the signature and ratification of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the establishment of a legal and regulatory framework as well as the creation of a national mine action centre, the CNAMS. Thanks to precious support from partners, the CNAMS has obtained positive results in relation to humanitarian demining, risk education and the protection of victims. However, challenges remain given the magnitude of the problem. To fulfil the objectives of Article 5 of the Convention, Ambassador SECK indicated that it is urgent to mobilise sufficient technical and financial resources alongside those already granted by the Government of Senegal through its national budget.

IV. OVERVIEW OF THE SENEGAL'S REMAINING CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

The **Director of the Centre National d'Action Antimines au Sénégal (CNAMS), Ambassador Papa Magueye DIOP**, offered a presentation on the status of Senegal's mine action programme and on Senegal's challenges and priorities until 2026.

Ambassador DIOP recalled Senegal's progress so far, indicating that 2 million square metres of the original 3 million square metres affected by anti-personnel mines have been released and 473 devices removed, non-technical survey were carried out in 489 localities, more than 1 million people received mine risk education, including 10,000 children, medical care was provided for 186 victims, the national standards and the national strategy were revised in line with international standards and interventions have been prioritized taking into account the needs of men, women and children.

These activities have resulted in a number of positive outcomes, including a strong propensity of populations to return to Casamance, a resumption of socio-economic activities, knowledge and awareness of the threat of explosive devices by development projects, a decrease in the number of accidents and a gradual restoration of social ties. However, due to the ongoing conflict, the inaccessibility of some areas and the lack of financing, work could not be completed.

Ambassador DIOP indicated that the conflict is now over with new peace agreements having been signed with some of the most complicated rebel groups. He indicated that previously inaccessible areas have now been made accessible. The southern region of Casamance is a region with a great development potential, in terms of tourism, natural resources and agriculture but noted that nothing will happen without demining. He indicated that the government of Senegal has decided to revitalize and modernize the CNAMS, to make demining a priority again so as to allow all the reconstruction and development programs to be implemented. If Casamance is free from anti-personnel mines, the whole of Senegal will benefit.

Ambassador DIOP recalled that Senegal requested three extensions of its Article 5 deadline, with the current extension running until 1 March 2026 and that the remaining challenge consists in carrying out non-technical survey in 116 localities and addressing an estimated area of 1,500,000 m², including 21 Confirmed Hazardous Areas (CHAs) with an area of 208,000 m² and 11 Suspected Hazardous Areas (SHAs) with a perimeter remaining to be determined. The remaining contamination impacts the free movements of goods and people, the socio-economic structures, trade with neighbouring countries and access to cultivation areas.

Ambassador DIOP indicated that in the next few months Senegal will be conducting non-technical surveys to identify all the dangerous areas, mark them before they can be cleared, improving its data management and relaunching demining activities with a call to all partners of international cooperation to assist. He also indicated that the CNAMS has received instructions to expand the number of demining operators and to use all available methods to release land and highlighted that CNAMS' work would benefit from additional capacity building for its experts and from more modern information management tools to manage its database.

Ambassador DIOP indicated that Senegal needs stronger financial resources, support for staff capacity building, renewal of equipment (demining machine, vehicles, IT equipment, etc.). He highlighted that a total of 15,000,000,000 FCFA (approximately 22 million euros) would be required to allow the country to become mine-free, the refugees to return to their land, the mine victims to be assisted and mine awareness programmes to continue in Casamance.

Senegal contributes to the annual functioning of the CNAMS with 300,000,000 FCFA and is ready to contribute to demining to demonstrate its willingness to make it a priority. 10-15 percent of the annual budget will be allocated to this priority and support from the international community will be requested for the rest. External support has been provided by the US since 2013, the European Union has contributed 1,000,000 euros, the Netherlands 800,000 euros both through HI and Sweden and Norway are contributing through MAG, firm promises have recently been made by Algeria and talks are ongoing with UNDP about a partnership to implement a new national programme for humanitarian development.

Ambassador DIOP concluded by reiterating the commitment for a mine-free Senegal and highlighting that his country will continue to be engaged in the work of the Convention even after completion to help neighbours from the West African region in need.

Humanity and Inclusion (HI) presented their activities in Senegal in the context of the ARC Project (Action Humanitaire contre les Mines pour le retour sécurisé des populations en Casamance) including land release activities, support for the return of displaced and refugee populations and support for the return of land to use by populations as well as development of socio-economic alternatives for this use.

Four actors are involved in the ARC Project: CNAMS, HI, Association Sénégalaise des Victimes de Mines (ASVM) and Humanitarian Dialogue (HD). The CNAMS coordinates mine action, assigns tasks and supervises, controls and validates the work carried out by operators, HI is in charge of the land release process (NTS, TS and clearance), socio-economic development and strengthening the social cohesion of returning populations, ASVM implements mine/ERW risk education activities and HD works to facilitate the acceptance of demining activities by actors in the conflict.

HI indicated that manual and mechanical demining are used in Senegal, and dogs are planned to be used. Teams are composed exclusively of local staff, trained with the support of the CPADD. Multi-disciplinary teams composed of men/women are responsible for manual clearance, MRE, and conduct survey when necessary. The mechanical demining team works with the support of a machine thanks to which many advances have been made. The machine being quite old, HI indicated that Senegal would welcome support to acquire a new one. HI also indicated that a study was carried out in Casamance which shows that drones can accelerate the process of mapping areas.

HI also provided information on the variety of channels and methods used by ASVM for its awareness-raising activities. HI indicated that during risk education and non-technical surveys, victims in need of assistance are systematically referred to the CNAMS. HI further indicated that it intends to rehabilitate the Orthopedic Rehabilitation Centre of the Ziguinchor regional Hospital.

In terms of reconstruction and socio-economic support for populations who are ready to return, HI indicated that it will build or rehabilitate access to basic social services and finance income-generating activities, either individual or collective projects at the village scale.

The main outcomes expected from this project are: improved mobility for the population, support by the communities of the development of their land, visibility for the contribution of demining in sustainable development processes, strengthening the rapprochement between authorities and communities and reinforcement of the knowledge of the risks and dangers of explosive devices. HI concluded by saying that it intends to continue supporting Senegal towards its demining objectives and will assist with socio-economic and peace consolidation activities.

MAG has been working with the CNAMS since 2020 to develop the humanitarian mine action aspect of their work and in this context, it provided support with Senegal's Article 5 objectives using MAG's experience and expertise in humanitarian action in the sub-region in the context of a regional strategy.

With mines continuing to have a significant impact in Senegal, MAG would like to extend their support to the CNAMS to get a better understanding of the mine contamination. MAG noted that Senegal has a robust programme despite the difficult context and highlighted the difficulty Senegal had faced until now to establish precise action plans in terms of time and resources needed as the extent of the contamination is not defined. The improvement of the security situation in Casamance over the past two years, peace agreements and a strong political will and commitment from CNAMS to progress towards a mine-free Senegal is greatly helping including in the development of a regional dynamic, Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau facing similar problems to Senegal and also being supported by MAG.

MAG indicated that it has supported the CNAMS in the revision of their standards, participated in the development of the strategic plan 2023-2025, contributed to identifying approaches sensitive to conflict to ensure a humanitarian approach to access communities, organised a workshop to update the land release process with an emphasis on non-technical survey and identified training and equipment needs.

MAG's upcoming activities include support to the CNAMS for the achievement of its objectives and support to the information management unit and teams in the field to deploy non-technical survey efforts and define more precisely the location of SHAs and CHAs. MAG indicated that the CNAMS has prioritised the NTS as it is the basis for a targeted land release as well as an effective and efficient use

of resources. MAG commented on the good collaboration it has with the other operators already present in Senegal.

HAMAP-Humanitaire introduced itself as a new player in mine action in Senegal. HAMAP-Humanitaire is an international development aid NGO whose mission is to enable populations to access, recover and develop their land and water resources through activities including mine action and access to water and sanitation which often extend to projects in the agricultural field.

HAMAP's approach is to strengthen local capacities within civil society, the aim being to train a local NGO in mine action so that they can complete the work cheaper. If relevant, this NGO could then address newly discovered areas or even to be deployed in the sub-region.

HAMAP-Humanitaire indicated that its mandate in Senegal would be to support the CNAMS and focus on the Bignona department where non-technical surveys need to be conducted in 101 localities. HAMAP-Humanitaire's action would complement HI and MAG's actions. The project in Senegal for non-technical surveys and mine risk education is currently unfunded and will rely on HAMAP-Humanitaire's partner on the ground, the Senegalese NGO APIT-Humanitaire for implementation.

V. SUMMARY OF INTERVENTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

UNDP indicated that it has been present in the region since 2008 and has worked with CNAMS on demining issues.

Casamance represents 12 percent of the total population of Senegal and is one of the country's poorest regions. Despite this poverty, the region has a strong potential in agriculture, forestry, fishery and tourism. UNDP noted that the area that remains to be cleared, is deserted and not accessible and represents an important cost to growth, to development and to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNDP indicated that there is a need to support the people and the communities to heal and to reintegrate. To this end, the government has elaborated a document called "Plan Sénégal Émergent", which contains its vision of Senegal emerging as a middle-income country by 2035. The third part of this plan, which integrates mine action priorities, is currently being developed and the government has also ensured that its mine action policies and legislation are integrated. As a partner, UNDP indicated that it supports and accompanies the government to provide quality assurance, in particular to identify the type of actions needed and the beneficiaries, especially looking at impact on youth and women. UNDP indicated that its actions are also seeking to ensure that social and environmental concerns are taken into consideration while doing mine clearance.

UNDP highlighted the government's commitment and indicated that the support and collaboration of partners is highly needed to attain the SDGs and to ensure that the spirit of leaving no one behind is assured.

GICHD highlighted the great seriousness of Senegal's national mine action authority which has given itself the means to manage and control its mine action programmes and ensures, through its national standards, that the actions of the operators fall within a framework that Senegal itself has established. The GICHD indicated that it is ready to assist Senegal in the development or revision of national standards and to access to French versions of online training modules, including IMAS and a module on mine risk education developed by the GICHD. The GICHD indicated that it has also offered assistance to evaluate, together with HI, Senegal's IMSMA system. Finally the GICHD invited Senegal

to participate in the next Francophone Regional Cooperation Programme workshop to be held at the CPADD in October 2023.

Algeria reiterated its interest to support African countries, and in particular Senegal, a brotherly and friendly country in the region, and indicated that it is ready to share its experience and examine concrete ways to engage in a bilateral cooperation with Senegal. Algeria indicated that it counts on Senegal's contribution in the promotion of a regional continental approach in mine action which will certainly be beneficial to all African countries and to Senegal.

The Netherlands indicated that it contributes to HI activities in Casamance through the contingency fund of the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs NGO programme. The Netherlands highlighted that in addition to the demining work, HI also works with HD to visit the villages where the displaced people are to return to and the refugee camps in Guinea Bissau, the Gambia and elsewhere in Senegal to prepare the populations for the return of the refugees, to let them know that reintegration will be an effort from both sides. The Netherlands noted that this work is an important contribution to the programme as it is done together with the demining. The Netherlands indicated that the budget line it used to finance these activities will only be replenished in 2025 and encouraged other donors to contribute to these activities and provide support to Senegal in this regard.

Switzerland indicated that the current favourable political and security situation provides a window of opportunity to implement Article 5 and that demining can be an important contribution to peace, security and development of Casamance and to the return of populations. At the end of April 2023, Switzerland supported the organization by a local NGO of a workshop on demining and development gathering key national, regional and international actors with the aim of supporting the existing positive dynamic and raise awareness on needs, hoping that this will contribute to resource mobilization.

The **European Union** thanked the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance for continuing to encourage partnerships through the provision of Individualized Approach platform. The European Union indicated that Senegal has been very much committed since 2017 to work on a national dialogue on various aspects of mine action, in particular by being a partner country on the EU funded project implemented by the ISU. The European Union looks forward to continuing the partnership with Senegal.

ICBL thanked Senegal, the Committee and the ISU for organizing the meeting and Senegal for openly sharing about their work and their remaining needs. ICBL indicated that it was pleased to hear that there are now conditions favourable to go ahead with the work and hoped that donors have been listening. ICBL highlighted the importance of supporting Senegal across the finish line and contributing with small amounts of funds to what could be a great success. ICBL offered their support to Senegal both from Geneva and from Casamance.

VI. CLOSING REMARKS

In closing, **Ambassador SECK** thanked the partners and participants who took the floor and engaged in a very enriching discussion. He also thanked them for the interest showed in Senegal and their readiness to support the country's demining programme.

Ambassador SECK also thanked the Director of the CNAMS for the updated information he brought to the meeting's attention. This information, he noted, will allow the partners to fully appreciate the issue and continue their commitment alongside Senegal. He concluded by recalling that the ambition of a world without anti-personnel mines is quite possible and reiterated that Senegal, for its part, will relentlessly pursue its efforts to stay within the time frame set by the Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties. He invited the partners to continue their dynamic partnership for the benefit of the populations of the natural region of Casamance who have suffered from the harmful effects of anti-personnel mines.

The Chair thanked Ambassador SECK for his closing remarks and all participants for their active engagement and expressed the hope that the Individualized Approach meeting will help Senegal further implementing its work. The Chair noted that the information shared at the meeting by Senegal and its partners was very valuable and helped better understand Senegal's national situation and needs. The Chair expressed the hope that Senegal can continue working with partners to strengthen existing partnerships but also bring new partners on board. This will be very important for the future and for achieving the aims of the Convention in Senegal.

The Chair mentioned that the Committee together with Senegal would prepare a summary report of the event which will be shared with all participants, aiming to provide further impetus for engagement and follow-up on specific matters that may be of relevance to specific participants. The report will also be posted on Senegal's country page on the Convention's website.

The Chair thanked all those who attended and encouraged participants to look at any avenues in which they can support the efforts of Senegal.

For further information or clarification on Senegal's mine action work plan, please direct all queries to **Ambassador Papa Magueye Diop, Director of the Centre National d'Action Antimines au Sénégal (CNAMS)** at cnamsdir.diplo@gmail.com