

Decisions on the request submitted by the Democratic Republic of the Congo for an extended deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention

1. The Meeting assessed the request submitted by the Democratic Republic of the Congo for an extended deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in mined areas in accordance with Article 5.1, agreeing unanimously to grant the request for an extension until 31 December 2028.
2. In granting the request, the Meeting noted that, while the Democratic Republic of the Congo had not been able to complete the implementation of the principle commitment it had made to complete implementation by its deadline, as recorded in the decisions of the Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made progress and has committed to carry out efforts to continue garnering an understanding of the extent of the remaining challenge and fulfil its obligations during the extension period.
3. In granting the request, the Meeting noted that the Democratic Republic of the Congo was projecting that it would need an additional three years to carry out technical survey and clearance of the remaining areas, finalise survey and clearance of suspected mined areas in Dungu territory of Haut-Uele Province, and strengthen the technical skills of the national demining capacity in the areas of Explosive Ordnance Disposal and addressing Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).
4. In granting the request, the Meeting welcomed the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressing contamination by anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature (IEDs which meet the definition of an anti-personnel mine) and its efforts to apply all provisions and obligations under the Convention to such contamination including during survey and clearance in fulfilment of Article 5 and when reporting in fulfilment of Article 7.
5. In noting that the Democratic Republic of the Congo has indicated that it is in the process of updating its multi-year work plan and mobilising resource for implementation, and that implementation of the request is conditional upon a ceasefire being in place, the Meeting noted that the Convention would benefit from the Democratic Republic of the Congo submitting to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation, by 30 April 2026, an updated detailed work plan for the remaining period covered by the extension. The Meeting further emphasised 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 remain to be addressed by which organisations during the remaining period covered by the request, and a detailed updated budget. The Meeting further noted the importance of the updated work plan containing detailed, costed, and multi-year plans for context-specific mine risk education and reduction in affected communities.
6. The Meeting also noted the importance of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's efforts to ensure that a sustainable capacity is in place in case that previously unknown mined areas are discovered following the Democratic Republic of the Congo declaring completion of its commitments under Article 5. In this regard, the Meeting noted that the updated detailed work plan would also benefit from including information on progress in establishing and operationalizing this sustainable national capacity.
7. The Meeting further noted the importance of the Democratic Republic of the Congo ensuring that a sustainable national capacity is in place to coordinate, regulate, and manage the national mine action programme including survey, clearance, mine risk education, and victim assistance. The

Meeting also noted the importance of the Democratic Republic of the Congo continuing its efforts to strengthen national level coordination including by ensuring regular dialogue with national and international stakeholders, including donors, on progress and challenges in implementation and requirements for assistance including through the establishment of a National Mine Action Platform, where possible.

8. The Meeting noted that, given the casualties and socioeconomic impact highlighted by the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its request, progress under Article 5 during the extension period could significantly enhance human safety and socioeconomic conditions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In this regard, the Meeting noted the importance of the Democratic Republic of the Congo ensuring that the most relevant land release standards, policies and methodologies, as well as mine risk education and reduction efforts, in line with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), are in place and applied for the full and expedient implementation of this aspect of the Convention.
9. Also in granting the request, the Meeting noted that the plan presented by the Democratic Republic of the Congo is workable, lends itself well to be monitored, and states clearly which factors could affect the pace of implementation. The Meeting also noted that the plan is contingent on consistent national and international funding and issues related to security. In this regard, the Meeting noted that the Convention would benefit from the Democratic Republic of the Congo reporting annually, by 30 April, to the States Parties on the following:
 - a. progress made relative to the commitments contained in the Democratic Republic of the Congo'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);
 - b. impact of survey outcomes in Dungu territory (Haut-Uele Province) and update on additional clarity obtained may change the Democratic Republic of the Congo's assessment of the remaining implementation challenge and timeframe for implementation, including adjusted annual milestones with information on the number of areas and amount of mined area to be addressed annually and how priorities have been established;
 - c. the remaining challenge in a manner consistent with IMAS, by disaggregating by 'suspect hazardous areas', and 'confirmed hazardous areas' and their relative size including by disaggregating between the type of contamination to ensure increased clarity on the remaining challenges;
 - d. 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;
 - e. implementation of mine risk education and reduction efforts in affected communities, including information on how priorities were established, methodologies used, challenges faced, and results achieved disaggregated by gender, age, disability, and other diverse needs and experiences of affected communities;
 - f. changes in the security situation and how these changes positively or negatively affect implementation;
 - g. efforts to ensure that NMAS are continuously reviewed to ensure their alignment with the latest IMAS;

- h. efforts to ensure consideration for the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys, and men and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities, as well as climate and environmental considerations in the implementation of the Convention;
- i. resource mobilisation efforts, external financing received and resources made available by the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to support implementation efforts; and
- j. progress on efforts to establish a sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas discovered following completion.

10. The Meeting noted the importance, in addition to the Democratic Republic of the Congo 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 and Meetings of the States Parties, as well as through its Article 7 reports using the Guide to Reporting.

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