Questions and Clarifications concerning the Request for Extension submitted by South Sudan

Committee on Article 5 Implementation
(Algeria, Norway, Thailand (Chair) and the United Kingdom)

The Committee welcomes South Sudan's commitment to ensure continued implementation of the Convention and its obligations. In this regard, the Committee welcomes South Sudan's submission of its Request for Extension of its Article 5 deadline. In order for the Committee to fulfil its mandate of preparing an analysis of the Request, the Committee would welcome additional information and clarification of the information provided by South Sudan in its Request for Extension.

1. The Request indicates that contamination is not limited to anti-personnel mines and that clearance efforts have been approached holistically (i.e. including the survey and clearance of other explosive ordnance (EO)). In this regard, and to provide additional clarity, the Request would benefit from ensuring that in each instance where contamination is mentioned it is disaggregated by the type of contamination, specifically distinguishing anti-personnel mine from other types of EO contamination, where possible.

   This has been addressed where applicable. For ease of reference, the amended sections are highlighted in yellow.

2. Further to the above, the Request would benefit from ensuring consistency concerning the remaining challenge. For example, with the exception of Pages 8 and 36 all other tables in the Request (including the work plan) refer to "minefields" which includes both anti-personnel and anti-tank minefields. The Request would benefit from ensuring consistent disaggregation between areas affected by antipersonnel mines and anti-tank mines.

   The tables are now disaggregated to indicate minefields to indicate the AP and AT minefields where possible.

3. The Request would benefit from ensuring consistent use of terminology in line with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) throughout the request Specifically, the Request would benefit from South Sudan consistently using the terms "cancelled" for areas addressed through non-technical survey, "reduced" for those addressed through technical survey, and "cleared" for areas addressed through clearance operations.

   This has been addressed in the text where applicable.

4. The Request makes reference to "newly identified mined areas" (2021-2024). The Request would benefit from specifying whether these areas are contaminated by anti-personnel or anti-vehicle mines to avoid ambiguity.

   This has been addressed on page 6 of the Request.

5. While the Request indicates that South Sudan assumes that it will be able to cancel a sizeable proportion of some of the largest anti-personnel minefields in the Greater Upper Nile region, the resources and timeline in South Sudan's Work Plan appear to have been calculated on the assumption that all re-surveyed areas will be subject to full clearance. The Request would benefit from indicated

approximatly how much of the remaining anti-personnel mined areas South Sudan expects to cancel through non-technical survey, reduce through technical survey, and release through clearance.

South Sudan intends to release 3,594,882 sqm of land previously contaminated by AP mines. This consists 2,662,879 sqm of CHA planned for clearance and SHA amounting to 2,280,682 sqm requiring resurvey. Approximately 40% of the resurveyed land totalling 912,273 sqm is estimated to be cancelled. However, since 2020 an average of 209,980 sqm per year of new AP contamination has been recorded which over five years amounts to about 1.05 million sqm. This means that the area likely to be cancelled through survey during period of the Request could be roughly equivalent to the new contamination expected over the same period, creating a balance that has been factored into the workplan.

6. The Request would benefit from additional information on the national financial resources projected for the implementation of the work plan as well as any efforts to explore innovative financing methods.

Additional information has been provided on page 58.

7. The work plan presented in the request (pages 58-66) contains projections for which tasks will be addressed through manual demining, mechanical demining, and areas to be re-surveyed. However, the information provided does not disaggregate between anti-personnel and anti-tank minefields. The Request would benefit from providing further disaggregated information by anti-personnel and anti-tank minefields.

The projections have now been disaggregated by AP and AT minefields as shown on the applicable tables.

8. The Request indicates that Suspect Hazardous Areas (SHA) account for more than 13% of the recorded contamination and that the majority of these SHA are located in areas which are inaccessible because of security, flooding or lack of infrastructure, the Request would benefit from additional information on how these areas have been taken into account in terms of the timeline for implementation presented in the request.

South Sudan has considered all recorded tasks including those located in currently inaccessible areas, in the development of its workplan and projected implementation timeline. Historically, several locations that were once inaccessible—particularly following the 2013 and 2016 civil conflicts—eventually became reachable because of peace dividends and improved local security. The NMAA and its partners remain optimistic that these areas will also become accessible over time as stability continues to improve and infrastructure gradually develops.

9. In addition to the above, the request indicates that areas located in “inaccessible areas” (e.g. flooding) may be subject to cancelation or significant reduction of up to 40%. The Request would benefit from additional information whether these areas are estimated to become accessible within the requested extension period. The Request would further benefit from additional information on South Sudan’s plans to monitor these areas to ensure that they can be addressed within South Sudan’s requested deadline.

Historically, there were areas that were inaccessible owing to the 2013 and 2016 civil conflicts, but with time, some of those areas have become accessible and mine clearance teams have been able to be deployed. In addition, there were some areas where flooding subsided and eventually were

accessed. NMAA and other implementing partners continuously monitors the security situation in the country, the flooding patterns and accessibility situation to inform operational planning and prioritize clearance efforts accordingly.

10. The Request includes a work plan, including the resources and capacity requirements, aimed at addressing all remaining EO contamination in South Sudan, estimated to be 22.3 square kilometres, rather than prioritizing areas affected by anti-personnel mines. The Request would benefit from disaggregating these figures and indicating how resources will be prioritized for the clearance of areas affected by anti-personnel mines.

    Where applicable, the costs and the workplans are now disaggregated showing AP and AT minefields.

11. The Request identifies 334 priority tasks for implementation. The Request would benefit from additional information on how these tasks have been prioritised and the assessed impact that the released land will have on the population of South Sudan. Similarly, the Request would benefit from including information on how Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) activities have been prioritized and if a coordination mechanism is in place to oversee EORE efforts, including monitoring and evaluation of EORE efforts. The Request would further benefit from any additional details on South Sudan's EORE plans for the extension period.

    Every year, the clearance tasks are prioritized through the annual operational planning process. This process is guided by data from the national contamination database and considers the available clearance assets and their respective capabilities. The prioritization also incorporates some key criterias to ensure that the deployment of resources yields the greatest humanitarian and socio-economic impact. These include but not limited to: Proximity to Communities; priority is given to contaminated areas near population centers where clearance will directly enhance the safety and mobility of civilians. Facilitation of Humanitarian Assistance: Areas that, once cleared, will enable the safe delivery of aid—such as food, health supplies, or shelter—are given precedence. Accessibility and Security: The current security situation and physical accessibility of an area are critical factors. Areas that are reachable and where security allows for sustained operations are prioritized for clearance.

    A work plan demonstrating the EORE requirement has now been added and a table showing the projected number of beneficiaries for the entire period of extension request.

12. The Request indicates a "shortened demining season." In this regard, the Request would benefit from indicated how/if the "shortened demining season" has been factored into the calculation underpinning the Extension Request.

    South Sudan experiences a distinct rainy season that typically begins in July and ends in September. In recent years, however, the rains have occasionally started earlier and lasted longer, directly affecting the operational window for clearance activities. These climatic patterns were carefully considered during the development of the workplan. Mechanical assets, which require dry conditions to operate effectively, are generally limited to deployment between December and June. In contrast, manual clearance teams can maintain productivity for up to ten months, accounting for variations in weather and accessibility factors.

    An additional clarification has been added on page 7 of the Request.

13. The Request indicates that the transportation of heavy demining machines by barge can take two months. The Request would benefit from additional information on how these logistical delays have been accounted for in the work plan timeline.

    An additional comment has been added on page 11.

14. The Request indicated the need for clearance organizations working in South Sudan to reconfigure their clearance capacity to deliver a more efficient overall clearance capacity and that this transformation has commenced with UNMAS opting to field eight fifteen-lane demining teams. The Request would benefit from additional information on the plan for other organizations to replicated this across the sector in order to deliver the required clearance capacity.

    An additional comment has been added on page 60.

15. The Request would benefit from any information concerning South Sudan's efforts to establish an incountry platform for regular dialogue among all stakeholders (national authorities, clearance operators, and donors) on progress, challenges and support for implementation in South Sudan. Furthermore, while the Request highlights South Sudan's intention to strengthen the National Mine Action Authority and develop a regional coordination mechanism, the Request would benefit from additional information on how and when this will be implemented.

    The NMAA in coordination with UNMAS has established a regular platform for dialogue among mine action stakeholders. Monthly operational coordination meetings are convened with all implementing partners, where NMAA consistently advocates for the prioritization of AP mine clearance as a key national objective and strongly encourages the partners to align their operational plans in support of the South Sudan's Mine Ban Treaty obligations. On challenges, the political instability during the 2nd quarter of 2025, led to the temporary evacuation of several donor representatives, this has disrupted initiatives and weakened the consistency of donor engagement. However, when the siituation stabilizes, then this engagement will commence.

16. The Request includes information on the recently adopted Gender Equality and Diversity policy. In this regard, the Request would benefit from additional references to the new policy and South Sudan's plan to implement it, including information about the steps South Sudan is taking to mainstream gender across its mine action programme and what plans it is putting in place to ensure that diverse needs are taken into account during the period of the extension request.

    South Sudan formally adopted its National Mine Action Gender Equality and Diversity (GED) Policy **on** 1 August 2025 with the full document publicly available through the GICHD**.** This policy provides a framework to strengthen the mainstreaming of gender, diversity, and inclusion within all mine action activities and aligns closely with the National Mine Action Strategy 2024–2028**.** Prior to the policy's launch, the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA**)** and its partners had already initiated key measures such as establishing forums and workshops for female deminers**,** creating female deminer networks and promoting qualified female personnel into leadership positions within technical teams. Current practices ensure that team composition remains gender-balanced and that EORE beneficiaries are fully disaggregated by gender, age, and where possible, disability status**,** allowing the programme to address the diverse needs of affected communities**.** Furthermore, EORE sessions are scheduled to accommodate women's domestic responsibilities, enabling inclusive participation**.** These early initiatives now serve as a foundation for the GED Policy, which will

formalize, expand, and guide future actions, ensuring that mine action under the Article 5 extension period is implemented in a fully inclusive and participatory manner, consistent with international best practices and donor expectations.

A similar text has been added to the Request on page 77.

17. Given uncertainty with respect to the continuation of the UNMISS-funded mine action teams, which represents 75% of clearance capacity, and the reported impact such a redirection of resources would have, the Request would benefit from the inclusion of additional information on the development of a resource mobilisation strategy fill any potential gap in support during the extension period.

Please see the answer provided to Question 6.

18. The Request would benefit from addressing Inconsistencies /typos, as follows:

a. The cover page should refer to the Twenty-Second Meeting of States Parties, rather than TwentyThird Meeting of the States Parties.

This has been addressed.

b. Entry into force of the Convention for South Sudan was on 9 July 2011.

A sentence has been added to indicate this on page 5 of the Request.

c. The Request would benefit from numbering the tables to make them easier to reference.
All the tables in the Request are now numbered and titled.

d. The table on page 33, reports the amount of anti-personnel confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) as 2,508,444 square metres. However, the correct value seems to be 4,335,896 square meters as per the table on page 36. The Request should address this to ensure that the table on page 33 can be reconciled with additional tables in the request (e.g. tables on pages 8, 13, 34, and 36).

The table referred to in query 18d on page 33 of the Request has now—for ease of reference—been titled and numbered in the Request as **Table 9.1**. The sum of both AP minefield CHAs (2,662,879 sqm) and SHAs (2,280,882 sqm) totalling 4,943,561 sqm matches the disaggregates and summations in **Tables 1, 4.2** (minefields disaggregated as AT and AP), **9.3** and **9.4**.

e. Data in the tables at times differs from the content in other parts of the request. For example, data in the table concerning progress to be made in 2025 suggests a total area of 7,273,216 square meters to be cleared manually and mechanically. This does not match the figure given in the following sentence "As of 31 December 2024, South Sudan has a remaining Article 5 challenge consisting of 114 mined areas measuring 4,943,561 square metres" indicated above. If projections include clearance of other hazards, this should be clearly explained to avoid confusion.

As stated in the Request on page 20, Section 5, "Complications and Challenges," the workplan addresses the remaining challenge by tackling all known hazardous contamination rather than focusing solely on AP minefield contamination. In the context of South Sudan, most contaminated sites contain mixed types of contamination meaning they are not limited to a single category such

as AP mines alone. Therefore, the projections in Tables 19.1 and 19.2 reflect the combined clearance requirements for both AP and AT contamination.

f. There also appears to be an inconsistency with the figures in the table on page 33, where the total area is indicated to be 7,343,423 square meters for CHAs and 2,022,109 square meters for SHAs versus the figure of 7,273,216 square meters also presented. Combining anti-personnel and anti-tank and mined roads may contribution to the lack of clarity and should be desegrated in order to ensure clarity on the remaining areas affected by anti-personnel mines.

A point of clarification is now provided under Table 9.2 of the Request.