

Analysis of the request submitted by Zimbabwe 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

(Algeria, Norway, Thailand (Chair), United Kingdom)

1. Zimbabwe ratified the Convention on 18 June 1998. The Convention entered into force for Zimbabwe on 1 March 1999. In its initial transparency report submitted on 11 January 2000, Zimbabwe reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Zimbabwe was obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 March 2009. Since this time, Zimbabwe submitted requests for extension to the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties in 2009, the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties in 2010, the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties in 2012, and the Third Review Conference in 2014, and the Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties (16MSP) in 2017. On each occasion, the Meetings of the States Parties agreed unanimously to grant Zimbabwe its request for extension. The request for extension granted to Zimbabwe by the 16MSP was for a period of eight years, until 31 December 2025.
2. In granting the request, the 16MSP noted that, Zimbabwe had proceeded with implementation in a commendable manner since its last request for an extended deadline was granted in 2014, having garnered an understanding of the true remaining extent of the challenge and developed plans accordingly that project the amount of time that will be required to complete Article 5. The Meeting further noted both the inclusive approach taken by Zimbabwe in the preparation of its request and the commitment by Zimbabwe to continue this inclusive approach in implementing and revising, as necessary, the plan contained in the extension request.
3. Zimbabwe, believing that it will be unable to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by its deadline, submitted on 1 April 2025 to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation ("The Committee") a request for extension of its deadline. On 27 June 2025, the Committee wrote to Zimbabwe to request additional information. On 8 August 2025, Zimbabwe provided a response to the questions posed by the Committee as well as a revised request for extension incorporating its responses. The Committee noted with satisfaction that Zimbabwe submitted its request in a timely manner and had engaged in a cooperative dialogue with the Committee. Zimbabwe's request is for five years, until 31 December 2030.
4. The request indicates that during the extension period it addressed a total of 55,819,413 square metres, including 8,800,627 square metres cancelled through non-technical survey (NTS), 31,397,905 square metres reduced through technical survey (TS), and 15,625,681 square metres cleared, identifying and destroying 213,924 anti-personnel mines. The request indicates that during the extension period Zimbabwe addressed and completed clearance on the following mined areas; Sheba Forest to Lincon Hill, Rusitu to Muzite Mission and Crook's Corner to Sango Border Post (Ploughshare). The request also indicates that 6,024,922 square metres of additional mined area was identified during the previous extension period. The Committee encourages Zimbabwe to continue seeking improved land release techniques which could lead to Zimbabwe fulfilling its obligations in a shorter time frame and to report on these efforts. The Committee noted the importance of Zimbabwe continuing to provide information on progress made in a manner consistent with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) by disaggregating information by the

land release methodology employed (i.e. cancelled through NTS, reduced through TS, or cleared through clearance) including information on the type of explosive ordnance located and destroyed.

5. The request indicates that the capacities of demining organisations in Zimbabwe fluctuated during the previous extension period, largely in response to international funding with the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) beginning operations in December 2018 with 45 deminers, later reducing to 25 deminers by mid-2025, APOPO beginning operations in January 2021, maintained a team of 36 deminers until February 2025, and ceased all mine action activities on 31 March 2025, the HALO Trust reducing its capacity from 175 to 133 deminers, while Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) consistently operated with 80 deminers. The request further indicated that the National Mine Clearance Unit (NMCU) restructured its teams, decreasing from 150 to 112 deminers.
6. The request indicates that Zimbabwe adopted a National Mine Action Strategic Plan for the period of 2018 – 2025 which was revised in 2023. The request also indicates that a revised strategic plan for the period of 2026-2030 will aim to integrate mine action into Zimbabwe's National Development Plan 2026-2030 aligning mine action with broader national development priorities. The Committee noted the importance of Zimbabwe providing information on its effort to ensure that survey and clearance are prioritised based on clear nationally driven humanitarian and sustainable development criteria with consideration for gender, age, disability, the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities including mine survivors, and the environment. The Committee noted, in this regard, the importance of Zimbabwe providing information on efforts to integrate Convention implementation activities into national development plans.
7. The request indicates that during the previous extension period Zimbabwe's National Mine Action Standards (ZNMAS) underwent review in 2022 and 2024 based on the latest IMAS and that the ZNMAS are binding on all operators in Zimbabwe. The request also indicates that the standard operating procedures (SOPs) of operators are inspected and approved by the Zimbabwe Mine Action Centre (ZIMAC) to ensure that they conform to the ZNMAS. The request indicates that these efforts included the drafting of a stand-alone quality management standard which is in progress. The Committee noted the importance of Zimbabwe continuing to report on its efforts to ensure that ZNMAS are continuously reviewed to ensure their alignment with the latest IMAS.
8. The request indicates the following factors which, in Zimbabwe's view, acted as impeding circumstances during the extension period: a) natural disasters; b) funding; c) Insufficient demining equipment; and d) delayed resumption of work by operators.
9. The request indicates a remaining challenge of 11,999,499 square metres, including: a) Musengezi to Mazowe River minefield measuring 1,809,661 square metres; b) Mazowe River to Rwenya River minefield measuring 8,562,236 square metres; c) Sango Border Post to Mwenezi River minefield measuring 830,239 square metres; and d) Lusulu minefield measuring 797,363 square metres.
10. The request indicates that during the previous extension period there were 46 casualties (4 killed, 42 injured) and provides data disaggregated by gender and age. The request indicates that anti-personnel mines continue to have a humanitarian and socio-economic impact on the people of Zimbabwe, with anti-personnel mines directly impacting communities, livelihoods, and the overall socio-economic development of affected areas, including denying freedom of movement and access to agricultural and grazing land for livestock. The Committee noted that the completion of Article 5 implementation during the requested extension period has the potential of making a significant contribution to improving the human security and socio-economic development in affected areas in Zimbabwe. The Committee further noted the importance of Zimbabwe continuing to provide data on casualties in a manner disaggregated by gender and age as well as on the socio-economic impact of remaining contamination.

11. As noted, Zimbabwe's request is for a five-year period until 31 December 2030 to fulfil its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention.
12. The request includes a work plan for the period of the extension that includes annual milestones for addressing each of the four main mined areas; a) Musengezi to Mazowe River minefield – 815,000 square metres in 2025, 900,000 square metres in 2026, and 94,661 square metres in 2027; b) Mazowe River to Rwenya River minefield – 2,831,000 square metres in 2025, 916,402 square metres in 2026, 1,292,339 square metres in 2027, 1,387,000 square metres in 2028, 1,296,495 square metres in 2029, and 837,000 square metres in 2030; c) Sango border post to Mwenezi river minefield – 140,000 square metres annually for the period 2025-2029, and 121,207 square metres in 2030; d) Lusulu minefield – 84,000 square metres in 2025, 120,000 square metres in 2026, and 149,000 square metres annually for the period 2027-2030.
13. The Committee wrote to Zimbabwe to request additional clarity on how land release projections were calculated. Zimbabwe indicated in its response that calculations were based on the type of minefield being worked on, type of terrain (e.g., rocky surfaces, slope, vegetation) , operational days, outputs per month by organisation, assets employed, operational challenges (e.g., metal contamination), and existing capacities.
14. The Committee also wrote to Zimbabwe to request information concerning disaggregated data on the amount of mined area to be addressed by different land release activities. Zimbabwe indicated in its response that there will be no further re-surveys through NTS and that a standardised approach will be employed by all operators in which TS lanes will be used to breach across mined areas and that once mine lanes are established, deminers will then follow evidence of the presence of anti-personnel mines with the remaining area being released through methods other than clearance. Zimbabwe also indicated in its response that the land release methodology to be used is based on the type of mined area and that mined areas comprising of cordon sanitaire minefields require full clearance (i.e., manual and mechanical clearances) whilst mined areas comprising ploughshare minefields require employment of TS, as well as clearance, with the deployment of mine detection dogs to tasks located on 'open and flat ground' and manual clearance reserved for thickly vegetated and steep slope areas.
15. Zimbabwe further indicated in its response the percentage of remaining area projected to be released through clearance and TS by organisations as follows; MAG, 65 percent clearance and 35 percent reduction, NPA, 11.6 percent clearance and 88.4 percent reduction, The HALO Trust, 54 percent clearance and 45 percent reduction, NMCU, 75 percent clearance and 25% reduction. The Committee noted with satisfaction that Zimbabwe is making use of the full range of practical methods to release land, with a high level of confidence, in accordance with IMAS.
16. The request also indicates that the current work plan is based on projected reductions in funding and capacity and that the ZIMAC will continue to revise the work plan at the start of each calendar year. The request provides information on the current organisational capacity and deployment locations as follows:
 - a) Musengezi to Mazowe River: The HALO Trust (19 manual teams - 133 deminers and one mechanical team).
 - b) Mazowe River to Rwenya River:
 - The HALO Trust: Mazowe River to Nyahuku (as above)

- NPA: Nyahuku to Nyamapanda: eight manual teams - 80 deminers, 1 MDD team - six mine detection dogs, four deminers.
 - MAG: Nyamapanda to Rwenya: five manual teams to be reduced to 3 from May 2025.
- c) Sango Border Post to Mwenezi River: NMCU (11 manual teams - 88 deminers, one mechanical team).
- d) Lusulu: NMCU (three manual teams - 24 deminers).
17. The Committee wrote to Zimbabwe to request information on why projected clearance rates for operators MAG and HALO Trust remain constant or decline post-2025, despite significant increase in annual funding. Zimbabwe indicated in its response that clearance projections for MAG and HALO had been calculated, based on operators current reduced capacities being maintained for the remaining period of the extension. Zimbabwe also indicated in its response that MAG currently had a projected shortfall of US \$18.62 million, and HALO Trust US \$19.09 million for the remaining period of the extension. .
18. The Committee wrote to Zimbabwe to request additional information on the projection that NPA would address 2,500,000 square metres in the Nyahuku to Nyamapanda ploughshare minefield in 2025, given its capacity of 80 deminers with limited amount of mined area to be cancelled or reduced. Zimbabwe indicated in its response that more reduction in this area is expected given NPA's deployment of mine detection dogs and given the nature and extent of contamination in the ploughshare minefield.
19. The request indicates that during the extension period Zimbabwe will be marking mined areas, in line with the ZNMAS, with warning signs and concrete beacons erected in mined areas. The request indicates that Zimbabwe collaborates with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education on efforts to integrate mine risk education into school curriculums. The request also includes information on the methodologies employed, including public media campaigns through radio and during national events. The request further indicates that Zimbabwe will fund risk education activities at US \$150,000 per year.
20. The Committee wrote to Zimbabwe to request additional information on the development of its risk education work plan, including efforts to take into consideration gender, age, disability, and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities and on how Zimbabwe ensures that both men and women from affected communities are equally informed and involved in mine action activities. Zimbabwe responded that before conducting mine risk education sessions, Zimbabwe conducts a needs assessment and consults with local stakeholders on contamination and socio-economic impacts, including data on accidents and survivors, and that this is followed by pre-focus group discussions to identify varying risk levels among communities which allow Zimbabwe to prioritise interventions. Zimbabwe also indicated in its response that it takes a data driven approach which ensures that mine risk education efforts are targeted effectively where they are most needed. The Committee noted the importance of Zimbabwe continuing to provide information regarding the implementation of context-specific mine risk education and reduction in affected communities including information on how priorities were established, methodologies used, challenges faced, and results achieved and include information disaggregated by gender, age, disability, and other diverse needs and experiences of affected communities.
21. The request indicates that Zimbabwe will require a total of US \$68.3 million for activities related to the implementation of Article 5 during the extension period. The request also indicates an allocation of US \$3 million by the Government of Zimbabwe for the extension period. The request indicates that the contribution from the Government of Zimbabwe does not include equipment

costs requirement for NMCU, and that equipment is budgeted when required and that any international support in form of demining equipment towards NMCU will be greatly appreciated.

22. The request indicates that approximately US \$68.3 million will need to be resourced from international support, with an estimated US \$15.52 million secured and US \$52.78 million still required. The Committee wrote to Zimbabwe to request information on planned or proposed resource mobilisation activities during the extension period. Zimbabwe indicated in its response that it will continue to engage international stakeholders, including through the Individualised Approach. The Committee also wrote to Zimbabwe to request information on plans for future national stakeholder dialogues, and the role of coordination mechanisms between ZMAC and operations. Zimbabwe indicated in its response that national stakeholder dialogues play an important role in mobilising new donors, and that strategic and technical working groups assist in aligning Zimbabwe's NMAS with IMAS and develop excellent working relationships with stakeholders. The Committee noted the importance of Zimbabwe continuing to report on its resource mobilisation efforts and external financing received, as well as resources made available by the government of Zimbabwe to support implementation efforts. The Committee further noted the importance of Zimbabwe strengthening 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.
23. The Committee wrote to Zimbabwe to request information on environmental protection measures in place. Zimbabwe indicated in its response that Zimbabwe works to minimise deforestation in areas that are manually cleared and plant exotic and indigenous fruit trees, such as mango and guava, on mechanically cleared land. Zimbabwe also indicated in its response that it uses a 'Green Field Tool' to evaluate the effect of its activities on climate and environment in areas of operations, and that this is done across all stages of work including during pre and post impact assessment as well as at the start of clearance activities. The Committee noted the importance of Zimbabwe continuing to report on its efforts to integrating climate and environmental considerations in the implementation of the Convention.
24. The Committee wrote to Zimbabwe to request clarification on mechanisms put in place for communities to report the identification of hazardous items, and the potential roles of district and provincial councils, police, and civil defence authorities in support residual risk management efforts. Zimbabwe indicated in its response that any individual can report suspected items to the nearest police camp who will in turn notify the army, and that this procedure is shared during mine risk education sessions. Zimbabwe also indicated in its response that it will continue to fund the NMCU, to address any contamination discovered after completion, and that ZIMAC will continue to carry out mine risk education at national level events, through radio, and through the school curriculum. Zimbabwe further indicated in its response that in preparation for completion, demining organisations have started working on their demobilisation strategies. The Committee noted the importance of Zimbabwe providing updates regarding the structure of Zimbabwe's mine action program, including updates on demobilisation strategies, as well as existing and new organisational and institutional capacities to respond to residual contamination following completion.
25. The request includes other relevant information that may be of use to the States Parties in assessing and considering the request, including disaggregated clearance figures since 2018, a detailed work plan for the period of the extension for each mined area.
26. In recalling that the implementation of Zimbabwe's national demining plan is highly reliant on international resources, and the capacity of implementing partners, the Committee noted that the

Convention would benefit from Zimbabwe submitting to the Committee by 30 April 2028, an updated detailed work plan for the remaining period covered by the extension. The Committee noted 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 and what area would be dealt with during the remaining period covered by the request and by which organisation, and a revised detailed budget. The Committee further indicated the importance of the updated work plan containing detailed, cost, and multi-year plans for context-specific mine risk education in affected communities.

27. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the information provided in the request and subsequently in response to the Committee's questions is comprehensive, complete and clear. The Committee further noted that the plan presented by Zimbabwe 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 plan is ambitious and that its success is contingent upon stable funding, retaining strong partnerships with international stakeholders and other matters creating an environment conducive to increasing the capacity of organisations involved in clearance activities. In this regard, the Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from Zimbabwe reporting annually, by 30 April, to the States Parties on the following:

- a. progress made relative to the commitments contained in Zimbabwe's work plan with progress in survey and clearance presented in a manner consistent with IMAS and progress in accordance with the land release methodology employed (i.e., cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey, or cleared through clearance) including information on the type of explosive ordnance located and destroyed;
- b. impact of survey and clearance outcomes and how additional clarity obtained may change Zimbabwe'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, ensuring disaggregation by suspected 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. implementation of context-specific mine risk education and reduction efforts in affected communities, including information on how priorities were established, methodologies used, challenges faced, and results achieved and include information disaggregated by gender, age, disability, and other diverse needs and experiences of affected communities;
- e. efforts to ensure that NMAS are continuously reviewed to ensure their alignment with the latest IMAS;
- f. efforts to align mine action strategy with Zimbabwe's national development plan;
- g. the humanitarian, social, economic, and environmental implications of contamination, including information on casualties disaggregated by gender and age;
- 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 and external financing received, as well as resources made available by the government of Zimbabwe to support implementation efforts;
- j. 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.
- k. efforts implementation of the demobilisation strategies, as well as existing and new organisational and institutional capacities to respond to residual contamination following completion.

28. The Committee noted the importance, in addition to Zimbabwe 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, Meeting of the States Parties and Review Conferences as well as through Article 7 reports using the Guide for Reporting.