



Comments on the United Kingdom's extension request

17th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty

27 November 2018

The UK's second extension request is for five years, and this appears to be a reasonable amount of time. The request provides a clear rationale for the requested time period, and it outlines the planned activities and available capacities. Through additional information submitted in August, the UK answered all the questions we had raised at the intersessionals.

Among the positive points:

- A detailed overview has been presented of progress made and challenges faced in the clearance of mines since the UK joined the Mine Ban Treaty.
- A detailed explanation of the remaining survey and clearance tasks, with timelines, has been provided to the extent of the UK's current ability.
- The UK has the required capacity to complete demining according to international standards, and we note that the two companies that have been contracted to work in the Falkland Islands have valuable knowledge of the challenging operational environment.
- An environmental impact assessment has been conducted, and measures taken to protect the flora, fauna and fragile terrain.

The following points will require updates from the authorities in the coming years:

As yet, the UK is unable to state the exact costs and timeline required for the completion of demining, because a technical survey must be conducted in Yorke Bay area. We take good note of the additional information submitted in August on this topic. The UK has committed to provide updated information on survey results and clearance plans at future meetings of States Parties – it would be good to also include details in Article 7 transparency reports where feasible.

The UK has indicated that its programme is fully funded until 2020. Once an accurate estimate is acquired for the cost of the rest of the project, we trust that all the expenditure would be approved in a timely manner, in order for the UK to meet its treaty obligations as early as possible.

And finally, future reporting on progress should include disaggregated data on the amount of square meters released through non-technical survey, technical survey, and clearance, in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards.

Thank you.