

ICBL Summary of the 12th Meeting of States Party to the Mine Ban Treaty Geneva, Switzerland, 3-7 December 2012

MINE CLEARANCE

3, 4 and 5 December

The 12MSP was marked by declarations of completion of mine clearance by **Denmark, Guinea-Bissau, Jordan, Uganda**, as well as a written declaration from the **Republic of Congo**. The announcements were met by warm congratulations from the **ICRC** and **ICBL**. Both organizations reminded states, however, that it was better to ask for a short additional deadline extension than to miss the deadline by a few months and that any mined areas discovered after completion should be cleared as a matter of urgent priority.

The meeting also granted mine clearance deadline extensions to four States Parties: **Afghanistan** (10 years), **Angola** (5 years), **Cyprus** (3 years) and **Zimbabwe** (2 years – 3rd request). The **ICBL** provided States Parties with oral and written comments and recommendations on the requests (Mohamad Shohab Hakimi, Francky Miantuala and Bob Mtonga delivered the ICBL comments.) A number of States Parties as well as the **ICRC** and **The HALO Trust** also shared their views on the requests. The ICBL and the ICRC, as well as the Analysing Group, encouraged Angola to shorten their extension request to 2-3 years, but ultimately Angola requested and received the original five years.

The **11MSP President** shared a series of recommendations aimed at ensuring that high quality extension requests and analyses are prepared. Several states expressed their views on the matter and it was decided to encourage States Parties to implement those recommendations, which include, for example, the need to keep drawing on external expert input when analyzing the requests, and the call for mid-term assessments of plans laid out by requesting states.

Under the guidance of **Indonesia** and **Zambia** as Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, States Parties adopted a new procedure to address situations where States Parties that had never reported Article 5 obligations report previously unknown mined areas after their clearance deadline has expired. Under the new procedure, States Parties that are unable to clear newly discovered contamination before the next MSP or Review Conference must request an extended deadline for the shortest possible time and no more than ten years. **Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, Switzerland**, and **Zambia** expressed their support for the proposal. The **ICBL** and **ICRC** also supported the process while noting that in their view, the beginning of the extension period would be the expired deadline.

During the session on mine clearance, States Parties that had been granted a clearance deadline extension at a previous meeting provided updates on their activities.

Algeria explained how it had released the two mined areas it had previously intended to keep for historical purposes and reported being on track to fulfill the commitments made in its original extension request. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** indicated that the total suspected hazardous areas had been reduced by 65.86 km² since the last report, and expressed concern with the decreasing donor interest. **Cambodia** expressed the hope to complete its baseline survey by the end of the year and to develop its demining plan in early 2013. **Chad**

announced the completion of its technical survey and said that a 2013-2017 mine action plan would be ready soon, with the aim to complete mine clearance by the end of 2017.

Chile reported that of 23.2km² total mined area, it has so far released 7.66 km². **Colombia** explained that the process to accredit The HALO Trust as the first civilian mine action operator in the country was entering its final phase, and that three other civilian organizations had also requested accreditation. **DR Congo** said that it would change its non-technical survey methodology, which had so far proven to be daunting and too expensive. It reported the clearance of 495,000 m² in 2011. **Croatia** indicated that 29.2 km² were cleared so far in 2012 and another 25.4 km² were released by survey.

Ecuador noted that 247,759 m² had been released in 2012, and said it intended to meet its 2017 deadline. Both Ecuador and **Peru** referred to their good mutual cooperation on border clearance. They both shared information on 48 new mined areas in Peru that Ecuador recently informed Peru about, with Peru adding that recent productivity gave them confidence they could still finish on time. **Eritrea** said it had released 38.7 km² from 2011 to November 2012 through clearance or survey. It noted that completing the country-wide Level 2 survey in 2014 as planned in its original extension request appeared particularly challenging.

Mauritania reported it had released 14 km² through survey in 2012, exceeding planned levels. **Mozambique** reported clearance of 27,763,046 m² from 2008 until 15 November 2012. It noted that 25 districts were still contaminated and that it aimed to complete clearance by its 2014 deadline. Under the transparency session, **Palau** explained that it does not consider having an obligation under Article 5, since most of the contamination on its territory is ERW – out of 17,500 pieces of ordnance found and destroyed over the past three years, there were 2 antipersonnel mines. It also

Senegal reported the release of 436,926 m² overall since 2008 and said a fundraising meeting with donors was planned for January 2013. Prompted by an ICBL question, Senegal announced that a national mine action plan would be presented at the 2013 intersessional meetings. **Tajikistan** reported releasing 9.8 km² since 2003, including 1.8 km² in 2012. The remaining contamination is about 7.7 km², with non-technical survey at the Uzbek border to be completed in 2013. **Thailand** indicated that 16.7 km² had been released in 2011-2012 and that a meeting with Cambodia had taken place in August 2012 to discuss border clearance.

The **United Kingdom** announced that the “next phase” of clearance starting in January 2013 would tackle five mined areas on the Falkland/ Malvinas Islands, adding it was fully committed to meeting its Article 5 obligations. **Argentina** also took the floor on the Falkland/Malvinas Islands. **Venezuela** noted that it had 658 mines remaining to be cleared, and though it had fallen slightly behind schedule it still predicted completion by its revised deadline of 1 October 2014.

Yemen noted that it was increasing the number of mine clearance personnel. It also said it was investigating recent mine use “by outlawed groups,” including in government buildings, but did not say it would report publicly on findings.

Other States Parties in the process of fulfilling their mine clearance obligations also shared reports.

Bhutan expressed the hope to complete the clearance of its three remaining mined areas (4,030 m²) this winter. **Burundi**, which had already declared completion of its mine clearance activities in 2011, noted that it still had to survey and clear 163 pylons and other areas in natural reserves that it had not previously been able to access. It said it was working towards its original April 2014 deadline, but that it might need to ask for an extension. **The Gambia** reiterated that it has no mine-affected areas. **Hungary** reported being on track to clear the mined area at the Croatian border by its August 2013 target date. **Iraq** stated its intention to complete all technical survey by the end of 2014 and reiterated its aim to complete its Article 5 obligations by 2018. **Niger** formally reported for the first time the discovery of a mined area (estimated 2,400 m²) in the North of Agadez, and outlined a clearance plan.

Serbia indicated that 164,019 m² had been released in 2012, and that it would probably have to submit an extension request to its 1 March 2014 deadline. **Somalia** reported on its contamination and mine clearance activities for the first time as a new State Party to the MBT. It said that the completion of clearance in Somaliland was expected in 2016, that the Landmine Impact Survey verification results in Puntland were expected by mid-2013, and it provided information on survey in South Central Somalia. **South Sudan** reported having 707 mined areas covering 159,367,011 m², and announced the adoption of a 2012-2016 mine action strategy in June this year. Since the entry into force of the MBT for South Sudan, 6,263,731 m² have been released.

Sudan announced that it would not be in a position to meet its April 2014 deadline and that it would request a deadline extension next year. **Turkey** said that clearance of the Syrian border was a priority, but that the tender issued in April 2011 had still not been awarded. It noted that it was developing Turkish Mine Action Standards, and a national mine action center and authority would soon be submitted to Parliament. Turkey also mentioned plans to obtain EU funding to clear two large sections of its eastern border: an agreement to clear 13.5 million m² should be signed by the end of 2012, and another project to clear 13.7 m² further south has also been prepared

Australia took the floor to encourage other donors to consider supporting affected states that have “a well-developed and coordinated plan to meet their clearance deadlines.” It urged affected states to join the Mine Ban Treaty and to prioritise mine action in their national development plans and in their national budgets. **Norway** congratulated the four states that announced completion and said we should aim to significantly reduce the number of affected states by the Review Conference. At the same time, it said it was deeply concerned about the slow progress in a number of states. It also highlighted the importance of defining the end-state of clearance and establishing capacity for residual contamination.

While noting some progress, **Switzerland** underlined remaining challenges in identifying contaminated areas and the overall lack of clear reporting on plans and progress. The **GICHD** described efforts over the past year to revise the IMAS on land release.

The ICRC and ICBL intervened on several occasions during the discussions on mine clearance.

The **ICRC** noted with concern that the number of states that have received a deadline extension is larger than the number of states that have completed mine clearance, and recalled that extensions were supposed to be the exception, not the rule. It welcomed the detailed

updates by a number of states and expressed concern that many were falling behind on their clearance plans. The ICRC announced that an African Union workshop for states with Article 5 obligations would be held in March 2013.

Speaking on behalf of the **ICBL**, Tamar Gabelnick commented on many statements, generally asking for greater clarity on progress reports and encouraging increased efforts to finish clearance in the shortest possible delay. She urged states to submit written revised plans if they are falling irretrievably behind on the plans submitted with their original extension requests. She also expressed the ICBL's strong support for the president's proposed improvements to the extension request process.

COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE

6 and 7 December

As Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance, **Albania** and **Thailand** noted that all States Parties are potential contributors and therefore any information exchange tool that may be developed should include data on the various forms of assistance that any State Party may be in a position to provide.

Algeria supported the initiative of a database or platform on international cooperation. **Austria** showed concern for the decreased levels of funding for victim assistance and recalled that such assistance is at the heart of the MBT. **Australia** reported on its ongoing review of its mine action funding strategy and emphasized its current contribution of funding and expertise towards the eradication of UXO in the Pacific. **Brazil** reported on its regional cooperation, including support for demining in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, as well as support to Lusophone African states. **Colombia** made an appeal to donor countries and international organizations to support multi-year financing for mine action as well as the need to develop an exchange of experiences amongst mine-affected countries.

Former military adversaries **Ecuador** and **Peru** took the floor jointly to explain the importance of cooperation on a number of mine action aspects, such as the dissemination of information and the sharing of logistical and operational facilities, including hospital facilities. **Japan** stated that it was a great supporter of South-South cooperation and its role in enhancing mutual trust among nations. It announced that it has come to an agreement with Angola and Cambodia to begin a multi-year South-South project to help Angola implement its obligations under Article 5.

The Netherlands noted its commitment of 45 million euros for mine and cluster munition clearance in 2012-2016, as well as a 4.5 million euros contribution to UNMAS, and encouraged other countries to make a similar commitment to multi-year funding. The Netherlands stated that gender was a central theme in its programs. **Spain** outlined its contribution to mine clearance in a number of countries.

Sweden reported spending around 130 million USD over the past 10 years on clearance of mines and ERW, including cluster munitions. **Switzerland** explained that transparency and national reporting play a key role in the provision of cooperation and assistance. When Switzerland makes a decision about supporting projects, the Article 7 reports and Article 5 requests are taken into account. The **United Kingdom** recalled that its 2010-2013 mine action strategy commits it to spending £41 million in 10 countries and is based on the idea that mine action should be linked with broader development initiatives. The UK also reported on general health-related funding to countries with landmine

survivors, stating that it believes victim assistance is best done by increasing the coverage and access to health systems.

The **African Union** noted that it is currently engaged in a number of discussions with the UN mine action services on how best to strengthen cooperation and coordinate assistance to AU member states.

The **GICHD** outlined its programmes and tools promoting information exchange, such as the Links in Mine Action (LIMA) database, an electronic portal on mine action launched in 2011. The **UN Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action** announced that the 2013 UN portfolio of 220 mine action projects was available online, and that the 2013-2018 UN strategy on mine action was being finalized. **ITF Enhancing Human Security** reiterated its support to a regional approach to mine clearance and outlined its current projects.

The **ICRC** made the point that Article 6 was not exclusively limited to funding but was also about the exchange of experience and skills and technologies. It deplored that stockpile destruction has been lacking international cooperation. Speaking on behalf of the **ICBL**, Alvaro Jimenez Millan welcomed the positive trends of both growth and transparency in international cooperation and assistance. Despite this, there remain questions on whether this money is being equitably distributed, current funding levels are sustainable, and if the money is being well spent. Donors were asked to use funding channels that are the most direct, effective, and give the most value for money. The decrease of 30% for victim assistance funding was also noted by the **ICBL** with disappointment.

Mentions of the ICBL or civil society

Albania and **Thailand** as Co-Chairs acknowledged that with regards to the development of information exchange, there already exists a wealth of knowledge including in the Landmine Monitor. **Austria** paid tribute to the **ICBL** on its 20th anniversary for its dedication, great accomplishments and partnership.