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**Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention  
on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,  
Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel  
Mines and on Their Destruction**

17 November 2015

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**Fourteenth Meeting**

Geneva, 30 November-4 December 2015

**Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda**

**Operation and status of the Convention. Presentation, reporting, discussion  
and decision with regard to: Conclusions and recommendations related to  
the mandate of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation**

**Analysis of the request submitted by Mauritania 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  
(Ecuador, Ireland, Poland and Zambia)**

1. Mauritania ratified the Convention on 21 July 2000. The Convention entered into force for Mauritania on 1 January 2001. In its initial transparency report submitted on 20 June 2001, Mauritania reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Mauritania was obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 January 2011. Mauritania, believing that it would be unable to do so by that date, submitted a request to the 2010 Tenth Meeting of the States Parties (10MSP) for a five year extension of its deadline, until 1 January 2016. The 10MSP agreed to grant the request.

2. In granting Mauritania's request in 2010, the 10MSP, while noting that progress in implementing Article 5 was limited until 2006, acknowledged that Mauritania's efforts had improved considerably after that time with the establishment of Mauritania's National Humanitarian Demining Programme for Development (PNDHD). The 10MSP also noted that the plan presented by Mauritania was workable and ambitious, but subject to the acquisition of equipment and the receipt of funds at levels that greatly exceed recent experience. The 10MSP further noted that the plan presented by Mauritania provided for the use of the full range of technical and non-technical means to release suspected hazardous areas in keeping with the recommendations adopted by the Ninth Meeting of the State Parties.

3. On 2 April 2015 Mauritania submitted to the Chair of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation a request for an extension of its 1 January 2016 deadline. Mauritania's request is for 5 years (until 1 January 2021). The Committee noted with satisfaction that Mauritania had submitted its request in a timely manner and had engaged in a cooperative dialogue with the Committee, including by meeting with the Committee on the margins of



both the February 2015 United Nations mine action programme directors' meeting and the Convention's June 2015 intersessional meetings.

4. In its 2010 request, Mauritania indicated that it was aware that, at that time, 64,819,740 square meters of area known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines remained to be addressed. Mauritania's 2015 request indicates that, with respect to this area, the PNDHD, with the support of Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), carried out non-technical survey operations from 1 June 2012 to 30 August 2012 in the L'adrar and TirisZemour regions and from 1-31 December 2013 in the region of Daklet Nouadhibou. The 2015 request further indicates that non-technical survey identified an additional 22 areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines totalling 2,292,026 square meters.

5. The request indicates that, of the 18 mined areas totalling 64,819,740 square meters reported by Mauritania as remaining to be addressed in Mauritania's 2010 request, all have been addressed with 2,686,000 square meters were cancelled, 1,290,000 square meters were reduced and 60,664,740 square meters were cleared, and with 587 anti-personnel landmines, 244 anti-tank mines and 5,179 pieces of unexploded ordnance destroyed. The request further indicates that, of the additional 22 areas identified, all have been addressed, with 2,391 square meters were reduced and 2,289,635 were cleared, and with 123 anti-personnel mines, 225 anti-tank mines and 4 pieces of unexploded ordnance destroyed.

6. The Committee noted with satisfaction that Mauritania had completed implementation of the plan presented to the States Parties in its 2010 request and had also addressed all newly discovered mined areas. The Committee further noted with satisfaction that Mauritania reported on progress in implementation of Article 5 in line with agreed practices of providing information on areas cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey and addressed through clearance. The Committee also noted that Mauritania obtained the international assistance required with contributions from Norway, Germany, Japan and the United Nations totalling US\$ 8,897,000.

7. The request indicates that survey and clearance work has been carried out in accordance with Mauritania's National Mine Action Standards. The request also indicates that the method used to clear land was through manual demining, which was supervised by NPA and with PNDHD responsible for quality assurance and quality control. The request further indicates that, at the conclusion of each demining task, a land release ceremony was carried out in the presence of the national authority and beneficiaries.

8. The request indicates that demining operations have created of an enabling environment for socioeconomic development in the formerly-affected regions, including for the development of tourism, the free movement of nomadic peoples and important infrastructure projects. The request also indicates that rural communities no longer live with the threat of mines and that there has been a significant decrease in landmine accidents, with the last reported accidents occurring in 2012.

9. The request indicates that, during the final phases of efforts to complete implementation of Article 5, Mauritania suspected that fortifications and minefields in Western Sahara may in fact be located in some instances in Mauritanian territory. The request also indicates that it is difficult to ascertain if this is the case given that there is no natural border and that border markers from the colonial period are unclear, non-existent and/or found at intervals of between 115 kilometres to 175 kilometres. The request further indicates that clarifying this situation is further exacerbated by the complexity of the political context related to Western Saharan conflict. In addition, the request indicates that a resolution to pertinent matters would permit Mauritania to determine if areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines indeed exist within Mauritania along its northern border. The Committee, while welcoming the efforts of Mauritania to obtain necessary

clarity regarding whether mined areas are located along its norther border, noted that effort to obtain this clarity could have been undertaken earlier.

10. As noted, Mauritania's request is for 5 years (until 1 January 2021). The request indicates that, by requesting 5 years, Mauritania intends to initiate and maintain a dialogue with stakeholders concerning Western Sahara in order to clarify whether mined areas are located within Mauritania along its norther border. The request further indicates that Mauritania aims that this dialogue would result in the acquisition of relevant topographic and cartographic information. The request also indicates that, if necessary, Mauritania will develop a plan to address any identified areas in its jurisdiction. In addition, the request indicates that Mauritania will maintain the PNDHD's demining units to support efforts to address any residual contamination and to carry out related activities. The Committee noted Mauritania's commitment to keep the States Parties informed of pertinent developments.

11. In the course of its cooperative engagement with Mauritania, the Committee, in June 2015, learned from a representative of the PNDHP that the PNDHP has requested the establishment of an inter-ministerial Committee to support efforts to obtain necessary clarity regarding whether mined areas are located within Mauritania along its norther border. The Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from Mauritania providing to the States Parties, by the 30 April 2016, information on the establishment, mandate, activities and results of this inter-ministerial committee. The Committee further noted that the Convention would benefit from Mauritania providing on an ongoing basis, including through its annual Article 7 report, any new information it obtains on whether mined areas are located within Mauritania along its norther border and, if relevant, on Mauritania's plans to address these areas.

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