

Decision on the request submitted by Ecuador for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention

1. The meeting assessed the request submitted by Ecuador for an extension of its deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in mined areas in accordance with Article 5.1, agreeing unanimously to grant the request for an extension until 31 December 2025.
2. In granting the request, the Meeting noted that, while Ecuador had not complied with the principle commitments it had made in its initial extension request, as recorded in the decisions of the Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties, to complete the survey of suspected hazardous areas and clear confirmed hazardous areas and carry out the handover of cleared land by 31 December 2022, it is positive that Ecuador has made continuous progress. The Meeting further noted the impact highlighted by Ecuador of the global pandemic which disrupted humanitarian demining operation in 2020 and 2021.
3. In granting the request, the Meeting noted that Ecuador was projecting that it would need approximately three years to complete the survey of suspected hazardous areas and clear confirmed hazardous areas and carry out the handover of cleared land. In granting the request, the Meeting further noted the importance of Ecuador ensuring that the most relevant land-release standards, policies and methodologies, in line with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), are in place and applied for the full and expedient implementation of this aspect of the Convention. The Meeting further encouraged Ecuador to continue seeking improved land release and certification techniques which could lead to Ecuador fulfilling its obligations in a shorter time frame. The Meeting noted that doing so could benefit Ecuador in ensuring that the humanitarian, social and economic impacts outlined by Ecuador in its request are addressed as quickly as possible. The Meeting further noted the importance of Ecuador continuing to report on its progress in a manner consistent with IMAS by providing information disaggregated by cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey and cleared.
4. In granting the request, the Meeting noted the importance of the Ecuador carrying out context specific mine risk education and reduction efforts that are tailored to the threat encountered by the population and are sensitive to gender, age, disability and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account.
5. In granting the request the Meeting noted that as the implementation of Ecuador's national demining plan will be affected by new information from ongoing clearance and survey operations as well as the risk factors identified in the request, the Convention would benefit from Ecuador submitting to the States Parties by 30 April 2024, an updated detailed work plan for the remaining period covered by the extension. The Meeting noted that this work plan should contain information on progress made, 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 a revised detailed budget.

6. In granting the request, the Meeting noted that the plan presented by Ecuador is workable, lends itself well to be monitored, and states clearly which factors could affect the pace of implementation. In this regard, the Meeting noted that the States Parties would benefit from Ecuador reporting annually, by 30 April, to the States Parties on the following:
 - a. Progress made relative to the commitments contained in Ecuador's work plan and the results of survey and clearance efforts in a manner consistent with IMAS in accordance with the land released methodology employed, (i.e. cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey, and cleared through clearance);
 - b. The impact of survey and clearance outcomes and update on how additional clarity obtained may change Ecuador's assessment of the remaining implementation challenge and timeframe for implementation;
 - c. The remaining challenge in a manner consistent with IMAS and disaggregated by suspected hazardous areas and confirmed hazardous areas and their respective sizes;
 - d. Adjusted milestones, including information on the number of areas and amount of mined area to be addressed manually and how priorities have been established;
 - e. Progress, methodologies employed, annual milestones and anticipated costs for quality control operations and progress in the handover of previously released land for the productive use of mine affected communities;
 - f. Updates regarding the implementation of mine risk education and reduction efforts in affected communities, including information on the methodologies used, the challenges faced and the results achieved, with information disaggregated by gender and age;
 - g. Resource mobilization efforts, external financing received and resource made available by the Government of Ecuador to support implementation efforts; and
 - h. Information on how implementation efforts take into consideration the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boy and men and the needs and experiences of people in affected communities.
7. In granting the request, the Meeting noted the importance, in addition to Ecuador reporting to the States Parties as noted above, of keeping the States Parties regularly apprised of other pertinent developments regarding its implementation of Article 5 during the period covered by the request and other commitments made in the request at Intersessional Meetings, Meetings of the States Parties and Review Conferences as well as through Article 7 reports using the Guide for Reporting.