
**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**

24 September 2012

Original: English

Twelfth Meeting

Geneva, 3-7 December 2012

Item 9 (a) of the provisional agenda

Article 5 extension requests and the extension request process

**Analysis of the request submitted by Afghanistan 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 President of the Eleventh Meeting of the States
Parties on behalf of the States Parties mandated to analyse requests for
extensions**

1. Afghanistan ratified the Convention on 11 September 2002. The Convention entered into force for Afghanistan on 1 March 2003. In its initial transparency report submitted on 1 September 2003, Afghanistan reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Afghanistan is obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 March 2013. Afghanistan, believing that it will be unable to do so by that date, submitted on 29 March 2012 to the President of the Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties, a request for an extension of its deadline. On 15 June 2012, the President of the Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties wrote to Afghanistan to request additional information. Afghanistan provided a response on 27 June 2012 and subsequently, on 31 August 2012, submitted to the President a revised request for an extension. Afghanistan's request is for ten years (until 1 March 2023).

2. The request indicates that since 1990 a number of surveys have taken place to quantify the mine contamination in Afghanistan including a 1990 to 1992 technical survey, a 1993 national survey, a 1994 to 2002 general survey and the 2003 to 2004 Afghanistan Landmine Impact Survey (ALIS). The request indicates that during the ALIS, all available recorded landmine and unexploded ordnance (UXO) contamination data was "retrofitted" or validated and that individual mine site data in the national database was linked to community data providing a clearer picture of the true extent of the impact on Afghan communities. The request indicates that, based on the results of the ALIS the initial Article 5 challenge included 3,527 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) covering an estimated area of 445.6 square kilometres directly impacting 1,914 communities and 978 SHAs contaminated by anti-tank mines and/or other items of UXO covering an area of 270.2 square kilometres directly impacting 657 communities.

3. The request indicates that following the ALIS, a “confirmation assessment” was carried out from 2005 to 2008 which aimed to continuously update the information gathered during the ALIS through revisits to communities. The request also indicates that a “polygon survey” of recorded SHAs was carried out from April 2008 to October 2009 to accurately define their perimeter providing more reliable information to improve prioritisation, planning and management of subsequent technical survey and clearance. The request indicates that, while the confirmation assessment and polygon survey cancelled a number of areas through non-technical survey, these activities also led to the identification of new SHAs and that some of the large suspected SHAs were broken down into smaller areas, in some cases into up to 70 separate areas. The request further indicates that following these procedures and at the date of querying the database for the development of the extension request, the challenge amounted to 11,128 anti-personnel contaminated areas covering an area of 648.4 square kilometres and impacting 2,454 communities.

4. The States Parties mandated to analyse requests submitted under Article 5 of the Convention (hereafter referred to as the “analysing group”) noted that, even prior to the 2009 Second Review Conference/Cartagena Summit, Afghanistan had taken steps consistent with the commitment made by States Parties through the Cartagena Action Plan to “identify, if they have not yet done so, the precise perimeters and locations, to the extent possible, of all areas under their jurisdiction or control in which anti-personnel mines are known or are suspected to be emplaced.”

5. The request indicates that Afghanistan suspects the presence of anti-personnel mines in other locations given that Afghanistan was not able to carry out activities related to the ALIS, confirmation assessment and polygon survey in a number of areas due to inaccessibility, including security reasons, and given that conflicts that took place in areas not covered by these activities are similar to those that took place in other mine affected areas.

6. The request indicates that during the period of 1989-2004 a total of 3,969 anti-personnel minefields were cleared measuring 189.73 square kilometres, 68 anti-personnel minefields were cancelled measuring 2.94 square kilometre, 2,652 other minefields were cleared measuring 121.41 square kilometres, 73 other minefields were cancelled measuring 5.01 square kilometres, 2,206 battlefield areas were cleared measuring 537.93 square kilometres and 25 battlefield areas were cancelled measuring 4.47 square kilometres. The request further indicates that during the period of 2005 to end of June 2012 a total of 5,442 anti-personnel minefields were cleared measuring 234.57 square kilometres, 1,519 anti-personnel minefields were cancelled measuring 105.44 square kilometres, 2,922 other minefields were cleared measuring 157.39 square kilometres, 846 other minefields were cancelled measuring 49.1 square kilometres, 1,030 battlefield areas were cleared measuring 310.27 square kilometres, and 238 battlefield areas were cancelled measuring 120.71 square kilometres. The request indicates that, to release areas recorded as known or suspected to contain mines, Afghanistan uses non-technical survey, technical survey, clearance (manual, mechanical, and mine detection dogs) and cancellation based on standards and principles outlines in the Afghanistan Mine Action Standards (AMAS), which in turn are based on the United Nations’ International Mine Action Standards.

7. The analysing group noted with satisfaction that constant progress had been made by Afghanistan every year since entry into force and that Afghanistan, in a manner consistent with Cartagena Action Plan commitments, is doing its utmost “to ensure that all available methods for the full and expedient implementation of Article 5.1, as recommended by the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties, are applied where and as relevant.” The analysing group further noted that should Afghanistan continue to seek improved land release and certification techniques, Afghanistan may find itself able to complete implementation in a shorter time frame than requested. In this context, the analysing group noted the importance

of Afghanistan continuing to report on its progress in a manner consistent with Cartagena Action Plan commitments to “provide annually, in accordance with Article 7, precise information on the number, location and size of (remaining) mined areas” and “information on areas already released, disaggregated by release through clearance, technical survey and non-technical survey.”

8. The request indicates that as of 30 June 2012 the remaining challenge included 3,847 anti-personnel minefields covering 289.4 square kilometres, 1,266 anti-tank minefields covering 264.95 square kilometres and 155 contaminated areas contaminated by other explosive remnants of war (ERW) covering 41.91 square kilometres. The request indicates that implementing partners had secured funding to clear a number of these contaminated areas in subsequent months (599 anti-personnel minefields covering 31.48 square kilometres, 169 anti-tank minefields covering 17.88 square kilometres, 58 areas contaminated by other ERW covering 15.03 square kilometres) and in some cases had started addressing these areas. The request further indicates that given this, in order for Afghanistan to meet its Article 5 obligations during the extension period, it will have to address 3,248 anti-personnel minefields covering 257.92 square kilometres. In addition, Afghanistan will have to address 1,097 anti-tank minefields covering 247.07 square kilometres and 97 areas contaminated by other ERW covering 26.88 square kilometres. The analysing group noted that, even with a consistent and sizeable effort having been undertaken by Afghanistan going back even before entry into force of the Convention, Afghanistan faces significant remaining challenges in order to fulfil its obligations under Article 5.

9. The request indicates the following as impeding circumstances: (a) the magnitude of landmine and ERW contamination in comparison to the available mine action resources and capacities; (b) no nation-wide peace and stability since the start of armed conflicts in 1979; (c) presence of many high priority anti-tank landmine contaminated areas; (d) indiscriminate use of landmines and the lack of minefield maps; (e) unknown areas due to lack of information and lack of urgent requirement for land use; (f) economic incentives, in some instances, to inflate the challenge and disincentives, in some instances, to complete or declare completion of demining efforts; (g) no significant advancement in landmine clearance technology that has substantially increased the productivity of manual mine clearance, which is the main method used in Afghanistan, and; (k) reconstruction and development priorities in Afghanistan.

10. The request indicates that mines have been killing and injuring civilians in Afghanistan since 1979 and that between 1979 and 2011 there have been a total of 21,262 casualties of mines and other ERW (17,225 injured, 4,037 killed). The request indicates that during the last seven years (2005 to June 2012) there have been 5,045 casualties due to mines and other ERW with a total of 1,157 killed (78 girls, 521 boys, 512 Men and 46 women) and 4,030 injured (337 girls, 1,986 boys, 1,569 men and 138 women) of which 32.3 per cent were mine related casualties and 67.8 per cent related to other ERW. The analysing group noted that Afghanistan has collected and provided data on victims “disaggregated by sex and age” in keeping with commitments made in the Cartagena Action Plan.

11. The request indicates that in addition to claiming human victims, landmines have had a negative socio-economic impact on the Afghan population through, for example, the killing of domestic animals, the blocking of agricultural and grazing land, irrigation systems, schools, health facilities and factories and by impeding the implementation of important development projects. The request further indicates that there have been significant socio-economic gains made since entry into force as a result of Article 5 implementation in both rural and urban communities including through the reduction in the number of victims as well as the clearance of land blocking agriculture and grazing

activities, access to roads and infrastructure development, amongst others. The analysing group noted that completion of Article 5 implementation during the requested extension period had the potential of making a significant contribution to improving human safety and socio-economic conditions in Afghanistan.

12. As noted, Afghanistan's request is for ten years (until 1 March 2023). The request indicates that the amount of time requested is based on the extent of the remaining contamination, careful and considerate development of the work plan and an estimate of anticipated funding for the duration of the extension request period. The request indicates three main factors that could impact positively or negatively on this timeframe: the results of surveys and resurveys, the amount of funds acquired and the security situation in Afghanistan. The analysing group noted the importance of Afghanistan having expressed the key variables could affect the implementation of the plan contained in the request.

13. The request indicated that the detailed work plan was prepared by a committee consisting of the MACCA, Department of Mine Clearance (DMC) and the seven major humanitarian demining agencies to ensure maximum use of MAPA expertise and collective ownership of the plan. The President asked Afghanistan how, given the positive feedback of the inclusive approach taken by Afghanistan to the development of their extension request, Afghanistan would maintain this "in-country" participatory approach over the extension period. Afghanistan responded by indicating that Afghanistan has taken the decision, in consultation with its implementing partners and government representatives to review or "test" the data and work plan twice a year (in January and in July) throughout the period of extension, though as the extent of contamination is reduced it may be decided that an annual check is sufficient. Afghanistan indicated that the dataset will be checked to make sure new data from non-technical survey and other sources is included and to determine the impact of new information on individual projects. Afghanistan also indicated that information would be shared and discussed by the work plan committee and any changes to the work plan will be made after collective analysis and agreement.

14. The analysing group noted the commitment of Afghanistan to review the work plan on a continuous basis and that Afghanistan and the States Parties as a whole would benefit if Afghanistan could inform the States Parties of changes to the work plan. The analysing group further noted both the inclusive approach taken by Afghanistan in the preparation of its request and the commitment by Afghanistan to continue this inclusive approach in implementing and revising, as necessary, the plan contained in the extension request.

15. The request indicates that, due to the varied nature of contamination in Afghanistan, it is not possible to consider the anti-personnel mine problem in isolation of anti-tank mine and other ERW contamination, particularly with some anti-tank minefields having a greater impact on communities than anti-personnel minefields. The request indicates that in order to address this challenge every "hazard" (i.e., every anti-personnel minefield, anti-tank minefield, or battlefield area) has been classified in terms of its impact on the community, using a set of impact indicators with an assigned numeric weighting, and that by applying these weighting factors each hazard is given a score which is then used to prioritise clearance. The request indicates that some high impact mined areas are located in extreme, high or substantial security risk areas as classified by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security and that clearance of these hazards is challenging and will require an approach which can ensure as far as possible the security of demining personnel.

16. The request indicates that one approach to address hazards in security risk areas is "community based demining" (CBD), with deminers recruited locally which enables community members to take ownership of the contamination and giving them an incentive to ensure the security of the project. The President asked Afghanistan how widely the CBD approach is being used in Afghanistan, if Afghanistan is considering extending this approach to areas classified with a security risk and if there were any lessons learned from

employing this approach. Afghanistan responded by indicating that this approach began in 2008 in response to demining needs in areas where roving demining teams could not operate due to insecurity and that it was then expanded with the number of demining personnel hired in impacted communities peaking at 1,310 in 2010. Afghanistan indicated that 72 CBD projects have been delivered and 11 are ongoing with the majority of them delivered in high or substantial risk areas, though some projects have been set up in safer areas in recognition that CBD projects are suitable for any area and can have benefits for the community regardless of the security situation. Afghanistan also provided some information on the benefits of the CBD approach as well as some of the key lessons learned. The analysing group noted the importance of Afghanistan having been pro-active in devising ways and means to implement the Convention in security risk areas.

17. The request contains tables indicating how much area in which locations will be addressed in each year of the extension period. It is projected that in 2013, 712 hazards measuring a total of 78.09 square kilometres will be released; in 2014, 706 hazards measuring a total of 64.57 square kilometres will be released; in 2015, 654 hazards measuring a total of 55.40 square kilometres will be released; in 2016, 528 hazards measuring a total of 40.18 square kilometres will be released; in 2017, 407 hazards measuring a total of 53.62 square kilometres will be released; in 2018, 376 hazards measuring a total of 60.34 square kilometres will be released; in 2019, 273 hazards measuring a total of 48.17 square kilometres will be released; in 2020, 331 hazards measuring a total of 40.36 square kilometres will be released; in 2021, 373 hazards measuring a total of 34.68 square kilometres will be released; and in 2022, 91 hazards measuring a total of 38.42 square kilometres will be released.

18. The request includes annual targets for Afghanistan to declare numbers of communities, districts and provinces “impact free” or “impact free from known hazards.” The analysing group recalled that while the States Parties at the Second Review Conference formally understood that “anti-personnel mines, and the clearance of them, have and/or could have a humanitarian impact, an impact on development, an impact on the disarmament goal of the Convention and an impact on solidifying peace and building confidence,” the States Parties expressed their understanding that terms like “impact-free (...) do not exist in the text of the Convention and are not synonymous with Convention obligations.” In this context, the analysing group noted that ambiguity exists regarding the goals expressed in the request given the use of terminology which may not be consistent with the fulfilment of Article 5 obligations.

19. The request indicates that there are gaps in the knowledge of contamination and that Afghanistan would conduct non-technical survey and an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) village by village (VbV) search beginning in April 2012, with both processes undertaken over a two-year period and with the aim being to update current understanding of the extent of contamination. The request further indicates the following milestones for non-technical survey and EOD VbV search: in 2013 non-technical survey of 863 impacted communities and 15,361 non-impacted communities and VbV search in 863 impacted communities and 2,295 non-impacted communities. The request also indicates that a small survey capacity will be retained throughout the extension period to regularly survey recorded hazards, assess new requests for mine clearance, conduct assessments for large-scale development projects and respond to EOD emergencies.

20. The President asked Afghanistan if there are expectations that some of the areas where VbV survey will be carried out will still be off limits due to security reasons and if the survey and VbV will capture land that is still not used/inhabited to avoid new discoveries from resettlement/movements of population. Afghanistan responded by indicating that, while it is true that some villages in the south, south east and east of the country will be challenging to access, the MAPA has come to the conclusion that “the right

Afghan can go anywhere”, that “if Afghans live there, we can go there”, and that it is a matter of changing the approach. Afghanistan indicates in its response some of the approaches such as the hiring and training of local residents to carry out quality assurance and survey work. Afghanistan also indicated that MAPA’s intention is to learn from the success of CBD and locally recruited QA Officers to access as much of the country as possible and that if this is not achievable in the two year timeframe, inaccessible areas will be followed up in later years and the findings incorporated into the work plan review process which will be conducted by MACCA every six months. Afghanistan also indicated that the survey and VbV may come across communities that are not fully re-inhabited and that in these cases the survey teams will consult with district authorities to determine whether some residents are living in neighbouring communities or districts in order to collect information from them and that if this is not possible these villages will be flagged in Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) indicating that there is a need to revisit them in the future. Afghanistan further indicated that there will be a survey capacity throughout the extension request period to deal with issues like these as they arise.

21. The request indicates that Afghanistan projects that US\$ 618.6 million will be required for activities related to the implementation of Article 5 during the period of 2013-2023. The request indicates that annual resource targets are based on what Afghanistan realistically expects to secure over the ten year period and that the assumption was made that for 2013 the same level of funds would be secured as in 2012, but that thereafter each year could expect to face a six per cent reduction in funding. The request also indicates that if the annual reduction in funds is more than six per cent the work plan will not be achievable in ten years and that if funds drop by less than six per cent year on year then the work plan will be achieved in a shorter period than ten years. The request further indicates that Afghanistan will endeavour to ensure annual average six per cent reduction is the minimum through active resource mobilization.

22. The President asked Afghanistan if, given that the extension request acknowledges that a lack of sufficient funding is one of the major risk factors for Afghanistan to comply with its Article 5 obligations, Afghanistan can provide information on the commitments which have been made at national and international levels. Afghanistan responded by indicating its efforts to mobilize funds as well as commitments that have been made including commitments by States to provide funds to the MAPA as well as national efforts to ensure that mine clearance has a prominent place in national priority programs.

23. The request includes other relevant information that may be of use to the States Parties in assessing and considering the request, including a detailed assessment of the remaining threat, institutional processes, photographs and description of the mines that are found within these areas, socio-economic impact table, additional accident data disaggregated by gender, clearance by implementing agency, as well as other relevant tables.

24. The analysing group noted with satisfaction that the information provided in the request is comprehensive, complete and clear. The analysing group further noted that the plan presented is workable, lends itself well to be monitored, states clearly which factors could affect the pace of implementation, and includes a process for keeping the plan up to date should new information be obtained or circumstances change. The analysing group also noted that the plan is ambitious and that its success is contingent upon the findings of the survey effort, stable funding and challenges posed by the security situation.

25. The analysing group noted that the annual benchmarks for progress contained in the request would greatly assist Afghanistan and all States Parties in assessing progress in implementation during the extension period. In this regard, the analysing group noted that both could benefit if Afghanistan provided updates relative to these timelines at meetings of the Standing Committees, Meetings of the States Parties, and Review Conferences. The

analysing group also noted the importance of Afghanistan reporting to the States Parties on any revisions to its plans and the reasons for such revisions.
