

Activities and Priorities for Implementation 2021-2022

Committee on Article 5 Implementation Belgium, Norway, Sri Lanka and Zambia (Chair)

I. Activities of the Committee

1. The Committee first met on 2 December 2020 to discuss its work plan towards the Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties (19MSP) and has met regularly since this time.
2. On 21 December 2020 the Committee distributed communications to the following States Parties:
 - a. Six States Parties with Article 5 deadlines in 2022 that were obliged to submit a request for extension by 31 March 2021 – Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mauritania, Nigeria, Somalia, and Turkey - to recall to them the Article 5 extension request process established by the States Parties; and
 - b. Five States Parties – Ethiopia, Iraq, Niger, Tajikistan and Ukraine - that were due to submit updated work plans in 2021 in accordance with previously granted extension requests and provide additional information as requested by decisions taken by States Parties on their requests for extension.
3. On 3 March 2021, the Committee distributed tailored letters to the 32 States Parties in the process of implementing Article 5 obligations to recall the 30 April 2021 deadline for providing updated information on implementation in accordance with Article 7. In its communication the Committee stressed the importance of respecting the 30 April deadline. The Committee also informed States Parties on how it would proceed in preparing preliminary observations for the Intersessional Meetings and encouraged the use of the Guide to Reporting.
4. During February and March 2021 the Committee held 21 bilateral meetings with the following States Parties: Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Iraq, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal, Serbia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Yemen and Zimbabwe to discuss their progress and challenges in implementing their Article 5 commitments.
5. The Committee held a bilateral meeting with Guinea-Bissau which had reported the discovery of previously unknown mined areas in 2020 to inform them on the decision of the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties for such situation and the importance of submitting a request for an extended deadline and their Article 7 Report detailing information of this discovery.
6. The Committee had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Mine Action Review which provided input on matters related to implementation of Article 5.
7. On 18 March 2021, the Committee together with the President and the other Committees of the Convention participated in a workshop encouraging adherence of States Parties to their obligation to submit Article 7 reports by 30 April 2021 and encouraging States Parties to include detailed quantitative and qualitative information on implementation of the Convention and the Oslo Action Plan in their Article 7 reports. During the meeting, States Parties were also encouraged to ensure

inclusion of information on their efforts to ensure consideration of gender and the diverse needs of mine affected communities into their implementation efforts.

8. During first half of the year, the Committee on Article 5 Implementation engaged with Eritrea which is currently in non-compliance with the Convention. On 25 March 2021, the Chair of the Committee together with the current President and the President of the Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties met with a representative of Eritrea to discuss Eritrea's current situation of non-compliance and how Eritrea could remedy this situation by the submission of its extension request and its increased engagement with the Convention and its implementation. During this meeting, a letter addressed to H.E. Osman Saleh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea in Asmara, was handed to the *Chargé d'affaires* of the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations at Geneva to identify interlocutors to hold a dialogue on Eritrea's implementation under the Convention.
9. On 8 April 2021, the Committee wrote to the United Kingdom, concerning the submission of its declaration of completion and emphasizing the importance of implementing the recommendations of the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties (17MSP) on the submission of voluntary declaration of completion as highlighted in the document entitled "Reflections and understandings on the implementation and completion of Article 5 mine clearance obligations"
10. The Committee carried out efforts to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the Article 5 extension request process as established by the States Parties. In this regard:
 - a. Following receipt of extension requests from Cyprus (9 February 2021) and Turkey (26 March 2021), the Committee reached out to expert organisations on 15 April 2021 to request input on these requests in accordance with the process established by the States Parties;
 - b. On 16 April 2021, the Committee sent a letter to all States Parties to inform them of the receipt of requests for extension submitted and to point out that extension requests due to be submitted by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Mauritania, Nigeria and Somalia were pending submission;
 - c. Following receipt of an extension request from Somalia (20 April 2021) the Committee reached out to expert organisations on 26 April 2021 to request input on Somalia's request, in accordance with the process established by the States Parties;
 - d. Following receipt of an extension request from Nigeria (17 May 2021) the Committee reached out to expert organisations on 19 May 2021 to request input on Nigeria's request, in accordance with the process established by the States Parties;
 - e. Following receipt of an extension request from Mauritania (1 June 2021) the Committee reached out to expert organisations on 4 June 2021 to request input on Mauritania's request, in accordance with the process established by the States Parties;
 - f. Following receipt of extension requests from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (9 July 2021), and Guinea-Bissau (11 August 2021), the Committee reached out to expert organisations on 13 July 2021 and 25 August 2021, respectively, to request input on the requests in accordance with the process established by the States Parties;
 - g. Following preliminary analysis of requests for extension the Committee sent requests for further information and clarification to the following States Parties: Cyprus, Somalia and Turkey,

(25 June 2021), Nigeria, (5 July 2021), Mauritania, (12 July 2021), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (24 August 2021); and

- h. Following the receipt of additional information / revised requests, the Committee completed the preparation of draft analyses and transmitted these to those States Parties submitting extension requests for factual review before submitting them to the Executive Secretary of the Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties (19MSP).
11. In the lead up to the Intersessional Meetings, the Committee worked on the development of preliminary observations based on information submitted by the States Parties. The Committee presented observations on the following States Parties that had submitted Article 7 reports ahead of the Intersessional Meetings: Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Cambodia, Colombia, Iraq, Mozambique, Oman, Peru, Senegal, Serbia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, Yemen and Zimbabwe.¹
12. The Committee further worked on supporting States Parties in their preparations for the Intersessional Meetings, including through providing guidance on presentations and templates to assist in presenting extension requests during the Intersessional Meetings. The Committee also took steps to arrange bilateral meetings ahead of the Intersessional Meetings with those States Parties submitting Article 5 extension requests in 2021: Cyprus, Eritrea, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Nigeria, Somalia, and Turkey.
13. In preparation for the Intersessional Meetings, the Committee on Article 5 Implementation organised a panel discussion in support of efforts by the States Parties to successfully conclude their mine action programmes, which provided some lessons learned and best practices in drawing down a national mine action programme, ensuring the establishment of a sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas discovered following completion and ensuring that key elements of the national mine action programme remain following completion (e.g. mine risk education).²
14. Ahead of next year's Article 5 deadline, the Committee sent a communication to:
 - a. Seven States Parties with Article 5 deadlines in 2023 that are obliged to submit a request for extension by 31 March 2022 should they not be in a position to declare completion of their Article 5 commitments – Afghanistan, Argentina, Ecuador, Serbia, Sudan, Thailand and Yemen - to recall to them the Article 5 extension request process established by the States Parties;
 - c. Five States Parties – Cambodia, Chad, Croatia, Serbia, South Sudan and Sudan - that are due to submit updated work plans in 2022 in accordance with previously granted extension requests and provide additional information as requested by decisions taken by States Parties on their requests for extension;
15. On 26 August 2021, Belgium, on behalf of the Committee delivered a statement during the CCW Protocol II discussions concerning anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature to further the understanding of the place of anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature within the framework of the Convention.

¹ <https://www.apminebanconvention.org/en/intersessional-meetings/june-2021/background-documents/>

² Ibid.

16. The Committee further worked with the President to ensure communications were sent out to States Parties that have not reported on progress in implementation of Article 5, to rectify this situation, where possible, ahead of the 19MSP.

II. Priorities for implementation

17. The Committee welcomes the continued cooperative interaction with States Parties regarding the implementation of Article 5 commitments throughout the year, through exchanges of letters and bilateral meetings. The Committee is committed to prioritise this cooperative dialogue in 2022.

18. The Committee noted with concern that following engagement with Eritrea, Eritrea has not submitted a request for extension of its Article 5 deadline or indicated to the Committee the challenges it faces in doing so. As Eritrea's deadline for completion was 31 December 2020, Eritrea is now in a situation of non-compliance. The Committee calls on Eritrea to engage with the Committee on Article 5 Implementation and to communicate its current situation to all States Parties.

19. While this year presented special circumstances, the Committee encourages States Parties requesting extensions of their Article 5 deadlines to adhere to the process established by the Seventh Meeting of the States Parties and the recommendations of the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties, in order to ensure that the collaborative approach envisaged by the process can take place resulting in the continued submission of high-quality extension requests. The Committee calls on all States Parties submitting request for consideration by the Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties to submit their request by no later than 31 March 2022.

20. The Committee will prioritise follow-up with States Parties on outstanding implementation of decisions made by Meetings of the States Parties/Review Conferences in the granting of requests for extension. In particular, follow up with those State that have outstanding updated work plans and Article 7 reports.

21. The Committee will continue its work with States Parties to ensure that their Article 7 reports and extension requests continue to reflect the commitment we made at the Fourth Review Conference with the adoption of the Oslo Action Plan related to the provision of, amongst other:

- a. Efforts to establish an evidence based baseline and plan;
- b. Context specific mine risk education and risk reduction plans;
- c. Information on progress and the remaining challenge in line with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS);
- d. Adjusted milestones of progress based on new evidence; and
- e. Effort to establish sustainable capacities.

22. The Committee welcomes the submission of Article 7 reports by most of the 33 States Parties implementing Article 5 commitments and will work to ensure that all 33 States Parties abide by their commitments to submit detailed Article 7 reports by 30 April. In particular the Committee will prioritise efforts to ensure that those States that have not submitted reports in 2021- Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Guinea – Bissau, Niger, Nigeria, State of Palestine, and Somalia - submit their reports as soon as possible and on a regular basis.

23. The Committee will also prioritise encouraging States Parties to report more on the methodologies employed in land release and mine risk education and risk reduction activities and on how these methodologies ensure that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered and inform all areas of Convention implementation and mine action programmes, in order to deliver an inclusive and context specific approach.
24. The Committee will also prioritise discussions on States Parties that are reported to be contaminated by anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature to continue building awareness of the need to address this contamination within the framework of the Convention.
25. The Committee will also continue making use of the European Union Council Decision in support of the implementation of the survey and clearance related aspects of the Oslo Action Plan, including by proposing national and regional dialogues for implementation.