

**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**

30 September 2010

Original: English

Tenth Meeting

Geneva, 29 November – 3 December 2010

Item 13 of the provisional agenda

Consideration of requests submitted under article 5

**Request for an extension of the deadline for completing
the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance
with article 5 of the Convention
Executive Summary**

Submitted by Zimbabwe

1. At independence in 1980, Zimbabwe inherited six distinct major mined areas that had been laid by the Rhodesian Army along its borders with Zambia and Mozambique. The original contamination covered a total of 511.05 square kilometres. It is estimated that these areas contained over 2,605,400 anti-personnel mines and that there were and are three different types of minefields as follows:

(a) Cordon Sanitaire: The cordon sanitaire barrier generally consists of three rows of sub-surface anti-personnel mines laid in a standard pattern with a width of 25 metres. This type of minefield was laid close to or on the international border.

(b) Ploughshare Minefield: The ploughshare minefield consists essentially of three rows of *ploughshare* directional fragmentation mines mounted on 0.5 to 1 metre high stakes protected by sub-surface anti-personnel mines with a width of 400 metres.

(c) Reinforced Ploughshare Minefield: The reinforced *ploughshare* minefield is essentially six rows of *ploughshare* directional fragmentation mines mounted on 0.5 to 1 metre high stakes protected by sub-surface anti-personnel mines with a width of 400 metres.

2. In order to respond to the contamination of mines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW), in 2000 the Government of Zimbabwe established the National Mine Action Authority of Zimbabwe (NMAAZ) to regulate all mine action activities in Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Mine Action Centre (ZIMAC) to plan and coordinate mine action activities.

3. Clearance of the minefields started soon after independence, with priority being given to clearing small gaps in order to facilitate infrastructure development, resettlement and economic development. Major clearance started in 1998, with the United States of America providing initial financial, material and training assistance to the Zimbabwe National Army to clear the Victoria Falls to Mlibizi minefield. This support was discontinued after one and half years leaving Zimbabwe to complete the bulk of the

clearance of the 286 square kilometre minefield on its own in 2005. Further financial assistance was provided by the European Union between 1999 and 2000 to demine the 145.28 square kilometre Musengezi to Rwenya minefield. This support was withdrawn when only 6.2 square kilometres had been cleared. Since then, there has been no international financial assistance provided to Zimbabwe to clear its mined areas. Zimbabwe has been doing everything possible within its capacity to rid itself of anti-personnel mines in compliance with the Convention.

4. In Zimbabwe's initial extension request submitted and granted in 2008, Zimbabwe had assumed that the minefields were 1.3 kilometre deep and therefore arrived at a much greater total area. During the initial extension period, ZIMAC, with support provided through the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) undertook a more detailed analysis using core data from sources that included the 1994 MineTech Survey Report, a 2000 Koch – MineSafe Completion Report, a 2010 HALO Trust Border Minefield Survey Report done for the Government of Mozambique and significant experience and knowledge gained by Zimbabwe's National Mine Clearance Squadron from more than 12 years of clearance.

5. This analysis revealed that contamination data available on the mined areas of Musengezi to Rwenya, Sango Border Post to Crooks Corner, Rusitu to Muzite Mission, Sheba Forest to Beacon Hill and Burma Valley can be assumed to be reasonably accurate, and thus it can be concluded with certainty that no detailed technical survey will be necessary (with the exception of the Cordon Sanitaire in the Crooks Corner – Sango Border Post minefield, which is not recorded, but is known to exist). What would be required though is to confirm the accuracy of available information on these mined areas through a limited general survey. The mined areas of Lusulu, Mukumbura, Kariba and Rushinga all require more detailed technical survey but the figures provided in this request are based on reasonable analysis of the data available.

6. These mined areas have had a severe socio-economic impact on Zimbabwean rural communities. They have severely affected the rural economy as very large numbers of livestock have been and continue to be killed by mines. Mines also continue to injure or in extreme cases kill humans, due to lack of suitable health care facilities in affected areas. Zimbabwe has not been able to build or maintain a reliable database of casualties caused by landmines. What is clear, however, is that the population that is most at risk from landmines includes poor rural subsistence farmers, who are often forced through economic necessities to take risks. While the number of casualties reported is relatively low, the real numbers are likely to be much higher.

7. Unfortunately, perimeter fences that ensured effective exclusion of civilians from mined areas have since been damaged by animals and removed by locals for domestic use. Owing to prohibitive costs and lack of sustainable measures to secure the perimeter fence from theft, no replacement has been placed but danger warning signs have been put in place. Furthermore, an area which has been achieved, albeit not comprehensively, is the delivery of mine risk education (MRE) to vulnerable communities. While more MRE programmes are planned, their implementation is hampered by resource constraints.

8. To date, 295.8 square kilometres have been cleared, 196,887 anti-personnel mines have been destroyed and it has been established that a further 13.93 square kilometres can be removed from the list of suspected areas for other reasons. Zimbabwe still has 201.32 square kilometres of land contaminated with anti-personnel mines and UXOs continue to be recovered.

9. To date, land release has been carried out through full clearance. Following the total clearance of a particular minefield, a quality control/quality assurance team carries out inspection of the cleared area. Commercial deminers in the past have used a combination of mechanical clearance and standard manual demining techniques followed by an

independent external quality assurance process. Military deminers use standard demining techniques, followed by an internal quality assurance process. Currently clearance of mined areas is being undertaken by military engineers with funding from the government. Subject to availability of funding, other players such as local commercial demining companies as well as international demining companies can also take part.

10. Zimbabwe has not been able to carry out its article 5 commitments due to the following:

(a) Inadequate funding for demining from the government: The economy is depressed and constrained as a result of factors such as illegal economic sanctions. Zimbabwe is unable to access funds from multilateral institutions to revitalise the economy. The government has numerous pressing commitments to meet with the little resources available.

(b) Insufficient demining equipment: Due to inadequate equipment, the available military demining capacity cannot be fully utilised. Aged mine detectors and personal protective equipment (PPE) currently in use are endangering the lives of deminers. There is need to immediately re-equip to sustain operations. There is need to establish local capacity to repair broken down demining equipment, especially mine detectors.

(c) Lack of meaningful mine action support from other States Parties and the international community: Zimbabwe has not received international support since 2000. This isolation has resulted in it lagging behind in mine clearance techniques and failing to get donor funding for mine action, particularly for contracting commercial demining companies. There is no independent verification of mine action standards. Illegal sanctions imposed by some potential donors have made it impossible for Zimbabwe to access any form of international assistance in the field of mine action. The sanctions have made it very difficult for Zimbabwe to import survey as well as demining equipment, most of which is not available locally.

11. A lot of benefits will be realised in humanitarian, economic, social and environmental aspects in the endeavour to fulfil the work to be carried out during the requested period. This will allow for more land to be relieved of mines thereby creating more room for greater opportunities. Business opportunities in areas of agriculture, tourism, mining, game ranching and industrial sites would be realised over the period. On the social aspect, local inhabitants will freely access their water sources, have ample grazing land for their domestic animals and travel across lands to visit their relatives without risking their lives and limbs. In such a situation, investors would be much more willing to make business in a mine free land.

12. The remaining 201.32 square kilometres is composed of 3.1 square kilometres of cordon sanitaire minefields and 198.22 kilometres of ploughshare or reinforced ploughshare. The terrain in some of these areas is mountainous and rocky thus making access to the minefield and employment of some of the demining equipment very difficult. Some of the areas have been affected by soil erosion as there are gullies while others are swampy or prone to flooding. In addition, there are areas that are thickly wooded or with hard clay surface which is hard to work on. All these characteristics as well as extremely high temperatures in some of the mined areas have the potential to significantly affect demining operations and have to be considered in planning.

13. Zimbabwe is requesting a second extension of 24 months until 1 January 2013. During this extension period Zimbabwe intends to seek and receive international technical assistance in order to train and equip a limited survey capacity and to improve the efficiency of the demining capacity. The survey teams will undertake survey of the four remaining “unknown” areas: Rushinga, Lusulu, Mukumbura & Kariba, as well as undertaking further survey of the cordon sanitaire between Crooks Corner and Sango

border post. We are confident of receiving assistance from an international partner at a relatively low level and we are optimistic that this will be the catalyst to encouraging donors to supporting our broader mine action goals.

14. At the same time as the survey process, our demining teams will work with international support to gain expert knowledge and update their skills which will offer a faster, more effective and safer way of operating. Although this activity would have been more beneficial if the international partner came with more modern equipment to equip our deminers, we are conscious of the likely challenges in doing so and are therefore prepared to use the old humanitarian demining equipment in our inventory. It is hoped that the international community will further appreciate Zimbabwe's commitment to ridding itself of all of its landmines.

15. Following the two year process of survey, retraining, consolidation of resources and fundraising, Zimbabwe is confident that it will be able to submit a further extension request containing a clear and effective plan for the final removal of all the remaining minefields as required under article 5.

16. In order to make an estimate of the funds required, the following assumptions have been made: (a) The total remaining suspected hazardous area is 201.32 square kilometres; (b) There is 381 kilometres of frontage of cordon sanitaire minefield; (c) There is 538.8 kilometres of frontage of either ploughshare or reinforced ploughshare minefields; (d) Cordon sanitaire minefields are assumed to be 25 metres in width and ploughshare and reinforced ploughshare minefields area assumed to be 400 metres in width; (e) Cordon sanitaire minefields are known to consist generally of three rows of anti-personnel mines and contain around 5,500 mines per kilometre of frontage; (f) Ploughshare minefields are known generally to consist of three rows of ploughshare directional fragmentation mines protected by AP mines containing an average of 100 ploughshare and 300 anti-personnel mines per kilometre of frontage; (g) Reinforced ploughshare minefields are known to consist of essentially four rows of ploughshare directional fragmentation mines protected by anti-personnel with an average 100 ploughshare and 5,800 anti-personnel mines per kilometre of frontage; (h) The average industry norm cost of clearing land is considered to be in the region of US\$1 per square metre (overall programme costs); and, (i) The approximate amount of land that can be released from the 201.32 square kilometres of suspected hazardous areas through means other than clearance will be 50 percent.

17. Based on these assumptions, at this stage we believe clearing all mined areas in Zimbabwe will cost in the region of US\$100 million. This effort would need to be managed tightly, and we believe that we are in a position to assume a certain degree of costs ourselves, with the support of donors and the United Nations. We would foresee proceeding in three phases:

(a) Phase I: Deminer refresher training (all demining staff); Non-technical survey of four unknown areas (Rushinga, Lusulu, Mukumbura & Kariba); Technical survey of small areas of each for the 5 known minefields; MRE in high impact areas, Relocating ZIMAC out of the military cantonment area; Undertake development of Zimbabwe national mine action standards in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS); and, Resource mobilisation.

(b) Phase II: Continued resource mobilisation; Re-equipping the mine clearance squadron and deploying it in a more effective manner; and, Working with partners to oversee either contract development for clearance activities and/or local organisations who agree to undertake major clearance activities.

(c) Phase III: Beginning major clearance operations; Develop a national strategic mine action plan; and, Implementing the national mine action strategic plan.

18. It is the intention of the Zimbabwean government to maintain its support to the clearance of landmines in Zimbabwe through the continued deployment of the mine clearance squadron. Although the unit is currently struggling from the lack of sufficient equipment, we expect that external support will assist us with updating the unit's demining skills and assisting us with the provision of basic demining equipment such as detectors and PPE.
