
**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**

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**Informal presentation of requests submitted under
article 5 and of the analysis of these requests****Analysis of the request submitted by Colombia 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 Second Review Conference on behalf
of the States Parties mandated to analyse requests for extensions**

1. Colombia ratified the Convention on 6 September 2000. The Convention entered into force for Colombia on 1 March 2001. In its initial transparency report submitted on 15 March 2002, Colombia reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Colombia is obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 March 2011. Colombia, believing that it will be unable to do so by that date, submitted on 31 March 2010 to the President of the Second Review Conference, a request for an extension of its deadline. On 18 May 2010, the President of the Second Review Conference wrote to Colombia to request additional information. Colombia provided a response on 17 June 2010 and subsequently, on 13 August 2010, Colombia submitted a revised request. Colombia's request is for 10 years (until 1 March 2021).

2. The request indicates that prior to entry into force the Colombian Armed Forces had emplaced anti-personnel mines around 35 military bases covering a total area of 159,652 square metres. The request further indicates that as of February 2010 mine clearance activities have been completed around 30 military bases with 110,999 square metres having been cleared and 2,719 anti-personnel mines and 81 unexploded ordnance (UXO) destroyed. In addition, the request indicates that clearance around the remaining 5 military bases is continuing, that to date 31,481 square metres have been cleared with 539 anti-personnel mines and 38 UXO destroyed, and that the remaining mined area around military bases will be addressed by October 2010. The States Parties mandated to analyse requests submitted under Article 5 of the Convention (hereafter referred to as the "analysing group") noted Colombia's commitment to clear and destroy all anti-personnel mines laid by the Colombia Armed Forces by Colombia's initial ten year deadline.

3. The request indicates that, in addition to mines emplaced by the Colombian Armed Forces, Colombia faces an unknown amount of contamination due to the use, by illegal

armed groups, of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) “with anti-personnel mine characteristics”. With respect to this aspect of the challenge faced by Colombia, the request indicates that, due to the nature of the actions by illegal armed groups, Colombia does not have a baseline against which one may measure progress and Colombia has been unable to determine the extent and nature of the challenge in quantitative terms. The request further indicates that Colombia has established a general perspective regarding the impact of IEDs at the national level based on “events related to anti-personnel mines” with 13,234 “events” recorded between January 2002 and December 2009 and with at least one “event” in 65 percent of Colombia’s 1,119 municipalities. Elsewhere the request indicates that 10,191 events are recorded in Colombia’s information management system. In addition, the request indicates that since 2002, 6 of Colombia’s 32 departments (Antioquia, Meta, Bolívar, Caquetá, Norte de Santander and Arauca) account for 58 percent of all “events” and that nearly 50 percent of all events are concentrated in 49 municipalities. The analysing group noted the contradiction regarding the number of “events” reported by Colombia.

4. The request indicates that since 2007, humanitarian demining units have completed clearance of all or part of 33 areas affected by the presence or suspected presence of IEDs with a total of 267,813 square metres released and 241 IEDs and 310 UXO destroyed. The analysing group noted no indication in the request of humanitarian demining having been undertaken between entry into force and 2007 in areas where IEDs had been emplaced and that progress since 2007 has been modest.

5. The request indicates that the method used by Colombia to identify mined areas starts with the registration of “events” related to anti-personnel mines. The request further indicates that for 29 percent of events registered between 2004 and 2009 there is a geo-referenced point, for 3 percent of events there is an approximate geographical reference linked to a geographical feature, and, for 68 percent of events there is no geographical reference and reference is only made with respect to a municipality. In addition, the request indicates that none of these reference levels is specific enough to determine a suspicious area, that a non-technical study of each event is required in order to determine the veracity of the suspicion of anti-personnel mines, that technical study must then be executed to determine the perimeter of the mined area and that this identification process has not been applied to the entire national territory due to existing capacity and safety problems. The President of the Second Review Conference asked Colombia if it could indicate where its identification processes have been undertaken. Colombia responded by listing 23 municipalities where 44 “impact studies” had been carried out between 2004 and 2009 and 7 municipalities where 28 “non-technical surveys” had been carried out in 2010. The analysing group noted that given the uncertainty expressed by Colombia regarding the identification of mined areas, estimates on the size and location of the remaining challenge are themselves uncertain.

6. The request reiterates that “a national baseline that allows the exact estimation of the dimension of the remaining task is not available”, but notes that a methodology has been used to establish an estimate of the amount of suspected hazardous area. The request indicates that this methodology involves assuming the presence of other anti-personnel mines within a 40 metre radius of the place where the anti-personnel mine that caused an “event” was located and that this works out to an approximate area of 5,000 square metres per event. The request further indicates that, on the basis of 10,191 “events” registered in Colombia’s information management system, this methodology suggests that there is a total of 50,455,000 square metres of “dangerous area”, that “experience shows that at least 60 percent of the areas considered as dangerous can be released through non-technical methods” and that therefore it is estimated that 20,182,000 square metres of “mined area” would remain. The analysing group, in recalling that the request indicates that none of the reported events is specific enough to determine a suspicious area, again noted the highly

uncertain nature of the estimates of the amount of “dangerous area” and the amount that could be released through non-technical means.

7. As noted, Colombia’s request is for 10 years (until 1 March 2021) on the basis of the seriousness of the problem it faces and “the uncertainty regarding the cessation of contamination.” The analysing group, while appreciating the particular challenges faced by Colombia, noted that prospective future mine laying is not a basis under the Convention for requesting an extension.

8. The request indicates the following as circumstances impeding implementation in a ten year period: (a) the uncertainty concerning the cessation of new contamination by illegal armed groups, including the manner in which past and new emplacements of IEDs prevent initiatives related to detecting and destroying IEDs; and (b) incompleteness of the available information. The analysing group noted that the absence of humanitarian demining efforts in areas where IEDs had been emplaced between entry into force and 2007 may have impeded implementation as well.

9. The request contains annual projections of the amount of area that Colombia intends to release through “non-technical clearance” and “technical clearance”, with it estimated that approximately 1.9 million square metres will be released in 2011 with annual amounts steadily increasing to see that in future years approximately 18 million square metres will be released in single year. The analysing group noted that, given that the estimate of contamination is uncertain, so too must be the annual projections of what will be released.

10. The request notes the relationship between Article 5 implementation and progress made through Colombia’s promotion of strategies to “ensure territorial control, defence of sovereignty and the consolidation of the government’s presence in the areas most affected by violence”. In this context, the request indicates that in 2011 to 2013, Colombia plans to intervene in 14 municipalities where safety conditions permit humanitarian demining to be undertaken. The request further indicates that these 14 municipalities, while representing only 2 percent of all affected municipalities, account for 17 percent of the total estimated contamination. The analysing group noted that it was not clear how many additional municipalities at present are safe for humanitarian demining to proceed. The analysing group further noted while Colombia has sought to improve the quality of the information on hazardous areas by implementing a pilot Landmine Impact Survey (LIS), the execution of the pilot LIS has encountered difficulties due to the reluctance of the population in areas where illegal armed groups can take reprisals against people that give information regarding the location of mined areas.

11. The request lists eight “work areas” for the period 2011 to 2020 that aim to address the prioritisation schemes, the optimisation of information management processes and the development of land release skills: (a) “consolidation of tools for analysis of priorities and opportunities”; (b) “consolidation of technical spaces for discussion and decision making at a strategic level”; (c) “qualification of on-field information gathering tools with operational purposes”; (d) “qualification of the information management system’s administration and synchronisation with support systems”; (e) “qualification of record procedures or removal operations and other related activities”; (f) “improved technical removal capacity of the Colombian government”; (g) “improved technical removal capacity of civil organisations”; and, (h) “improved additional non-technical removal capacity”.

12. In noting that information management issues faced by Colombia seem to be an important component for the success of operations during the extension period, the President of the Second Review Conference asked Colombia why the updating of tools and instruments for information collection will only take place in 2011 and what has impeded Colombia from having addressed information management issues during the first ten years after entry into force. Colombia responded by indicating that, before 2005, the focus for

information management was on revealing the magnitude of the problem in order to prioritise mine action in the national budget and on locating anti-personnel mine victims to promote their inclusion in government programmes and that the information management system was highly customized for these tasks. Colombia responded further to note that, since 2005, an information management function dealing solely with the minefields on military bases has existed and that needs related to management of information on areas mined by illegal armed groups became evident at the beginning of demining operations in communities in 2007. Colombia also responded by indicating that it is working with the GICHD, UNMAS and iMMAP adjusting information management procedures and tools in order to initiate demining operations by civilian organizations.

13. The request indicates that Colombia's plan includes the increase in the number of Colombian Government humanitarian demining squads from 9 in 2011 to 14 in 2013 and thereafter continuing to increase until there are 25 squads in 2020. The request further indicates that Colombia's plan also foresees that 2 "civil organisations' squads" be operative in 2011 with this capacity increasing until it reaches 85 squads in 2020. In addition, the request indicates that this growth is subject to safety conditions in areas in which interventions would take place and the willingness of organisations and the governments that finance them.

14. The request indicates that Colombia has technical clearance methods and standards which are included in the country's National Humanitarian Demining Standards and in seven Operational Procedures in force including the following: procedure to clear mined areas to help the communities affected by the presence or suspected presence of anti-personnel mines, IEDs and UXO; procedure to clear mined areas with mine detection dogs; procedure to clear mined areas through mechanical demining; procedure to destroy anti-personnel mines and IEDs; procedure to destroy anti-personnel mines and UXO through synthesized nitro methane; procedure to sweep a gully; and, procedure to clear a mined area to a deeper level. The request indicates that the main goal of these procedures is to ensure that an area is cleared according to International Mine Action Standards. The President of the Second Review Conference asked Colombia if these methods are actually being used in the field. Colombia responded by indicating that although Colombia has operational procedures in force to clear mined areas with dogs and with mechanical procedures, such procedures have not yet been implemented.

15. The request indicates that Colombia reduces hazardous areas by dismissing those areas that have already been used for agricultural or construction purposes, roads or paths frequently used by the population, areas within which an engineering work has made some serious changes to the land, and areas where there are "clear signs that the land is being used by the population". However, the request also indicates that "Colombia has yet to develop and certify land release criteria based on non-technical methods". The President of the Second Review Conference asked Colombia to comment on how, in the absence of criteria for land release, it releases areas. Colombia responded in June 2010 by indicating that up to 2009, impact and technical study teams determined the dangerous areas by "cancelling" or "informally releasing" lands but that "it is not appropriate to say that defined territories were released through this informal procedure." Colombia further responded by indicating that in May 2010 "criteria for land release through a general survey" and "criteria to confirm or discard contamination in an area with APM/UXO/IED" were approved and recorded in the Humanitarian Demining Battalion's Operational Procedures.

16. The analysing group, in recalling the highly uncertain nature of Colombia's estimates of the amount of "dangerous area" and the location of the areas that might actually require clearance, noted the importance of Colombia making use of the full range of practical methods to release, with a high level of confidence, areas suspected of

containing anti-personnel mines as recommended by the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties. In this regard, the analysing group noted the contradiction between Colombia's June 2010 response indicating that since May 2010 there have been approved criteria for releasing and cancelling land and the indication in the August 2010 revised extension request that "Colombia has yet to develop and certify land release criteria based on non-technical methods". The analysing group further noted the confusion introduced by Colombia's indication that "areas reduced through technical and non-technical studies are not considered as cleared areas" and that this may have an impact on the extent to which non-technical study and technical study, as described in paragraph 5 above, indeed have contributed to verifying or refuting the suspicion of anti-personnel mines and to determining the perimeter of mined areas.

17. The request indicates that quality assurance in Colombia is ensured through the presence of national supervisors and international monitors from the Inter-American Defence Board of the Organization of American States. The request further indicates that quality control is carried out through the inspection of cleared areas which is carried out by a different team from the one that cleared the area and which acts on behalf of Colombia's national mine action authority. The request also indicates that the process is then completed with a final study.

18. The request indicates that the Government of Colombia has assured the availability of the necessary resources to increase humanitarian demining capacity until 2012. The request further indicates that it is projected that the Government of Colombia will invest a total of over US\$ 92 million between 2011 and 2020 in humanitarian demining capacity, assuring the growth in capacity mentioned in paragraph 13. The analysing group noted the significant financial commitment being made by Colombia in support of its efforts to implement Article 5.

19. The request indicates that the governments that finance "civil (humanitarian demining) organisations" are expected to invest a total of over US\$ 180 million between 2011 and 2020 (or an annual average of over US\$ 18 million) in humanitarian demining capacity, assuring the growth in capacity mentioned in paragraph 13. Annual amounts are expected increase from approximately US\$ 900,000 in 2011 to approximately US\$ 3.7 million in 2012 to over US\$ 20 million in 2013. Given no indication in the request of past international financial contributions to humanitarian demining in Colombia along with the large amounts expected in the future, the analysing group noted that Colombia's resource mobilisation projections are extremely ambitious.

20. The request indicates that Colombia projects a total of over US\$ 5.2 million between 2011 and 2020 (or an annual average of over US\$ 527,000) in costs for "non-technical study teams". The request further indicates that Colombia projects US\$ 40,000 in one-time costs in 2011 and US\$ 110,000 in annual costs related to "task appointment and resource focalization" during the requested extension period, US\$ 190,000 in annual costs for information management during the request extension period, and US\$ 1.125 million in other information management costs between 2010 and 2012. The analysing group noted that there was no indication in the request regarding the expected source of funding to cover these costs.

21. The President of the Second Review Conference asked Colombia how it established the budget for national and civilian demining squads as well as the investment needed to sustain the non-technical teams. Colombia responded by indicating that costs were based on the costs of the Colombian Armed Forces' existing humanitarian demining costs for maintenance, operations and equipment.

22. The request indicates that there have been significant socio-economic gains made as a result of Article 5 implementation. The request indicates that humanitarian demining

activities facilitate the return of the displaced population and the recovery of communities. The request indicates that since 2008 a total of 2,375 people in six municipalities have benefited from these efforts. The request also indicates that in spite of these efforts, IEDs continue posing a real threat to the welfare of communities. The request further indicates that anti-personnel mines have a differentiated impact on the most vulnerable populations with indigenous communities particularly hard hit. The request indicates that between 1990 and 2009 a total of 8,245 Colombians have fallen victim to antipersonnel mines, 32% (2,513) of them being civilian and 68% (5,321) members of the “Public Forces”, with 78% (6,130) of these surviving their injuries. The request further indicates that, concerning the civilian victims, 12% (303) were women and 22% (557) were underage at the time of their accident. The analysing group noted that Colombia had provided in its request data on mine victims disaggregated by age and sex in keeping with commitments the States Parties had made through the adoption of the Cartagena Action Plan.

23. The request includes other relevant information that may be of use to the States Parties in assessing and considering the request including a variety of tables and maps as well as images of improvised explosive devices found in Colombia.

24. The analysing group noted that, while it is understandable that Colombia has asked for the maximum time available given the extent of the known or suspected contamination problem, Colombia is doing so based on an incomplete picture. The analysing group further noted that in order to attain a better picture of the situation, it would be beneficial for Colombia to provide additional clarity to the Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties (11MSP) in 2011 regarding what areas are in the process of “Democratic Consolidation” and what areas currently provide the necessary security conditions to carry out humanitarian demining tasks, as well as the provision of more information concerning these areas.

25. The analysing group noted that it is unfortunate that, after almost ten years since entry, Colombia does not have the information in place to report in a more precise manner on the location of areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines and hence to develop an implementation plan based on concrete information. In this context, the analysing group noted that it would be beneficial if Colombia provided an update to the 11MSP on steps that are being taken to develop and implement more effective methods determine the actual location and size of suspected hazardous area in municipalities where this may be possible.

26. The analysing group noted that given the extremely ambitious resource mobilisation projections and given the importance of a sustained high level of external support, Colombia could benefit from developing as soon as possible a resource mobilisation strategy which included clarity regarding its national commitment during the extension period.

27. The analysing group noted that given the activities Colombia is undertaking initially in 14 municipalities during the period 2011 to 2013 as well as other efforts to more closely define the level of contamination, and, given that Colombia has defined specific objectives for the development of methodologies to support mine clearance operations by its armed forces and civilian organizations, Colombia should have a much clearer understanding of the location and nature of contamination by the end of that period as well as on steps that can be taken to address this contamination. The analysing group also noted that Colombia has provided a clearance plan only for the period 2011 to 2013. In this context, the analysing group noted that it would be beneficial if Colombia presented to the Thirteenth Meeting of the States Parties (13MSP) in 2013 a revised implementation plan that contained and took into account a clearer and more substantiated understanding of the location and nature of contamination and that included revised annual projections of which areas would be address when and how. In addition, the analysing group noted that it would

be beneficial if Colombia provided ongoing detailed updates relative to commitments made in its extension request at meetings of the Standing Committees, at Meetings of the States Parties and at Review Conferences.
