

ZIMBABWE UPDATE ON ARTICLE 5 EXTENSION REQUEST IMPLEMENTATION

BACKGROUND

1. The challenges that remain for the Article 5 are not much different from the original challenges faced when the request was made given that not much has been done to address the problem although much effort is being put. Only 40% of the mined area has been cleared leaving the greater portion of land still contaminated. The country was slapped with economic sanctions at the height of the land reform programme in 2000. This has resulted in a serious economic meltdown and strained multilateral political and economic relationships with the international community. Until recently, Zimbabwe has been unable to access funds from multilateral financial institutions like the IMF and the World Bank. As such, Zimbabwe has been unable to import the necessary capital survey and demining equipment and contract commercial demining companies that could complement the minefield survey and landmine clearance efforts. From year 200, the government has been using military deminers for its demining efforts. A few survey and demining equipment the country has aged with no replacement as the country does not manufacture equipment of its own. Since the beginning of 2009, no significant progress was made due to lack of adequate funding. Consequently, what I have here is to a large extent a recap of some of the contents of our Article 5 Extension request we submitted in 2008.

2. The country had requested and was granted 22 months to conduct survey operations to accurately determine the extent of the contaminated area. With nothing having been done in this regard, for the whole of 2009, the timeframe for survey, clearance and releasing mined areas is now lagging behind with one year. Logically this implies that survey operations that were supposed to be completed in 2011 can now be completed in 2012. The assumption will be that the country would have secured the US\$4 056 000 that is required for training of surveyors and operations thereof. As the country is currently relying on the 1994 minefield survey reports, conduct of resurvey of the suspected contaminated areas is imperative. It is only after the resurvey that the country will be able to come up with a strategy on the clearance of and land release. However, a provisional breakdown of cost estimates for survey and clearance operations based on expenses to be incurred on each minefield, and on a rate of US\$2/m² for commercial demining shows that Zimbabwe requires 45 473 530 USD to completely clear the estimated contaminated area.