

BURKINA FASO



CLEARING THE MINES 2024

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2009
NEW EXTENDED DEADLINE NEEDED TO RETURN TO COMPLIANCE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION:
EXTENT UNKNOWN**

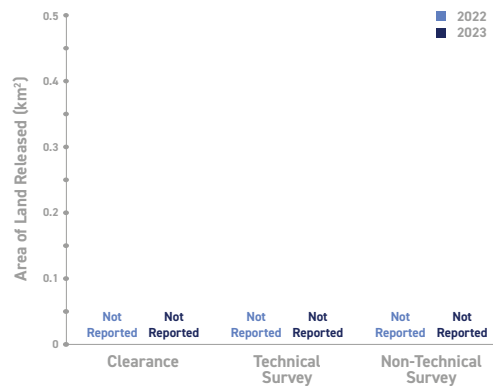
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2023

NOT REPORTED

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2023

NOT REPORTED

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Burkina Faso submitted an Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 7 report covering January 2022 to December 2023, providing detailed information on incidents related to improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including improvised mines. In 2023, nine of the country's thirteen regions recorded IED incidents, with a concentration in the Centre-North, East, and Boucle du Mouhoun regions. For the second consecutive year, Burkina Faso recorded more civilian than military victims of explosive devices.

The National Commission for the Control of Arms (CNCA – Commission Nationale de Contrôle des Armes) has prepared a five-year national strategy to counter IED threats and a three-year action plan for 2023–25. It validated four new national standards in 2023: on explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), national stockpile destruction planning, animal detection systems, and IED disposal, bringing the total number of national mine action standards (NMAS) to 12.

FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW

The explosive ordnance threat that began in the northern regions neighbouring Mali and Niger has expanded in the last five years to cover 11 of Burkina Faso's 13 regions. Between 2019 and 2023, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) recorded 1,232 casualties of whom half were civilians. A large number of IEDs are victim-activated, which means they are generally considered anti-personnel (AP) mines in international law. Successive *coups d'état* in January and September 2022 have led to a reduction in international

funding for mine action channelled through the national authorities. In recent years, the number of civilian victims has increased as they appear to be deliberately targeted by IEDs used by non-State armed groups (NSAGs) with a view to blockading areas and controlling supply routes. NSAGs have also learnt to produce more IEDs, and faster, employing components such as fertiliser, sugar, fuel, and batteries. In 2024, the CNCA even reported the dropping of explosive devices from drones.¹

¹ Presentation of Burkina Faso, UN National Directors Meeting (NDM27), Side event, 30 April 2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Burkina Faso should request a new APMBC Article 5 deadline from the other States Parties as a matter of priority.
- Burkina Faso should formalise its data collection, analysis, and sharing processes in order to establish an effective information management database.
- In its reporting on contamination, Burkina Faso should seek to disaggregate AP mines, including of an improvised nature, from other IEDs and AV mines.
- When circumstances allow, Burkina Faso should develop a civilian mine clearance capacity in addition to its military counter-IED capabilities, seeking international assistance, as required.

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- National Commission for the Control of Arms (Commission Nationale de Contrôle des Armes, CNCA)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Army Engineers EOD Unit
- Defence and security forces

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- DanChurchAid (DCA) (only risk education)
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC) (only risk education)
- Humanity & Inclusion (HI) (only risk education)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG) (only risk education)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (only risk education)
- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Burkina Faso has undergone major political and security upheavals in recent years. Since the end of 2016, it has been confronted with large-scale attacks by NSAGs which have killed thousands of people and displaced approximately two million.² The violence is mainly concentrated in the Liptako-Gourma area, which, in Burkina Faso, encompasses the Sahel, East, North, and Boucle du Mouhoun regions. NSAGs, particularly Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and the al-Qaeda affiliate, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), have used command-detonated IEDs and landmines to control supply routes and increase their areas of influence.³ Security operations are carried out by the defence and security forces ("Forces de Défense et de Sécurité", FDS) supported by State-backed militias, especially the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland (VDP),⁴ which were established by Law No. 028-2022/AN of 17 December 2022.⁵

Burkina Faso submitted an initial APMBC Article 7 transparency report in 2000 in which it stated that it was not affected by AP mines. In June 2023, however, Burkina Faso informed States Parties at the intersessional meetings about new use of IEDs on its territory, including AP mines of an improvised nature. In 2024, it reported the increased,

scattered use of improvised AP mines, noting "the presence of two or three IEDs, sometimes more, in one single area, in particular on supply routes and on routes used by the FDS, as well as in close proximity to areas where civilian population live. The devices are discovered by the FDS during operations, as well as by the civilian population."⁶ Types of IEDs include devices that are victim-activated and meet the treaty definition of an AP mine, as well as command-detonated devices or those set to detonate after a time delay.⁷ Of the 168 incidents recorded in 2023 by UNMAS, 76 (45%) were victim-operated IEDs.⁸

The extent of AP mined area is not known. Burkina Faso explained that under the current security context, it cannot conduct non-technical survey (NTS) or technical survey (TS) to accurately determine a baseline for contamination. Collecting data has been a challenge.⁹ In its latest Article 7 report, Burkina Faso indicated that 729 IED incidents had occurred since 2017 in 12 of Burkina Faso's 13 regions, with most occurring in the Sahel region (197), followed by Est (164), Centre-Nord (123), Nord (86), and Boucle du Mouhoun (65) (see Table 1).¹⁰

2 Presentation of Burkina Faso, Regional Conference on Improvised AP Mines, Ghana, 13–15 February 2024; and see: "Violent Extremism in the Sahel", *Center for Preventive Action*, 14 February 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/47GoFR6>; "Burkina Faso : le capitaine Ibrahim Traoré dément tout 'mouvement d'humeur' au sein de l'armée", *Le Monde*, 20 June 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3WsEzv4>; and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), "Burkina Faso", Last updated 14 May 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3SeHGnM>.

3 Global Centre for the Responsibility To Protect, "Central Sahel", 31 May 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/4d9GJoU>; and Amnesty International, "Burkina Faso: Armed groups committing war crimes in besieged localities", 2 November 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/4d6ckru>.

4 ACLED, "Africa overview", June 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3Se0Zfl>.

5 Email from Intendant Col.-Maj. Anselme Sanou, Permanent Secretary, CNCA, 30 August 2024.

6 Article 7 Report (covering 2022 and 2023), p. 12.

7 Statement of Burkina Faso, Intersessional meetings, 20 June 2023; Presentation, Regional Conference on Improvised AP Mines, Ghana, 13–15 February 2024; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022 and 2023), p. 7.

8 Email from Halimatou Toure, Associate Programme Officer, UNMAS, 19 June 2024.

9 Article 7 Report (covering 2022 and 2023), pp. 4 and 9.

10 Article 7 Report (covering 2022 and 2023), pp. 3, 4, and 13.

Table 1: IED incidents, including improvised mines, by region (2017 to March 2024)¹¹

Region	No. of incidents
Boucle du Mouhoun	65
Cascades	44
Centre	5
Centre-Est	22
Centre-Nord	123
Centre-Ouest	4
Centre-Sud	1
Est	164
Hauts Bassins	14
Nord	86
Sahel	197
Sud-Ouest	4
Total	729

Since 2017, the explosive incidents have caused 1,433 victims – 713 fatalities and 720 injured (see Table 2).¹² Despite the reduction in the number of victims between 2022 and 2023, UNMAS has explained that at least 40 incidents involving IEDs have not been included in the database because they did not cause victims.¹³

Table 2: Victims of IEDs, including improvised mines (2017 to end-March 2024)¹⁴

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Totals
Civilians injured	0	0	15	29	20	106	91	39	300
Civilians killed	0	0	24	48	57	96	98	28	351
FDS injured	7	25	33	46	83	144	72	18	428
FDS killed	9	58	36	31	46	107	50	14	351
Totals	16	83	108	154	206	453	311	99	1,430

While the security forces were the main targets in the past, civilians accounted for 62% of total casualties in 2023 and in 2024 through to the end of March.¹⁵ In 2024, from January to May, UNMAS recorded 120 IED incidents (an increase of 50% compared to the last five months of 2023) resulting in 206 victims, 127 of them civilians.¹⁶

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

The presence of explosive remnants of war (ERW) will likely increase in Burkina Faso along with the intensification of military operations.¹⁷ At the time of writing, no information was available on the extent and locations affected by ERW.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 4 and 5.

¹² Ibid., pp. 3 and 13. The figure of 1,433 was indicated on page 3 but 1,430 on page 13.

¹³ Email from Halimatou Toure, UNMAS, 19 June 2024.

¹⁴ Article 7 Report (covering 2022 and 2023), p. 13.

¹⁵ Calculated by Mine Action Review based on data provided in the Article 7 report (p. 13).

¹⁶ Email from Halimatou Toure, UNMAS, 19 June 2024.

¹⁷ Ibid.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

In addition to regulating small arms and light weapons (SALW), the CNCA is also the national mine action authority in Burkina Faso. Operating under the Office of the Prime Minister, the CNCA has only limited resources dedicated to mine action. Several other actors involved in counter-IED operations, such as army engineers, the gendarmerie, and civil protection, do not always share information with the CNCA.¹⁸ The coordination framework for exchanging information on IEDs is the mine action working group (GTLAM – “Groupe de Travail de la Lutte Anti-mines”) that brings together the Permanent Secretary of the CNCA; the army engineers; the Ministry for Humanitarian Action; UN agencies, in particular UNMAS and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF); and international NGOs, including Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Humanity & Inclusion (HI), and Danish Refugee Council (DRC). The GTLAM meets every three months.¹⁹

The CNCA has made important progress in the fight against IEDs. In September 2022, it organised an IED self-assessment workshop with key stakeholders, using the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) tool and the support of UNMAS. Following this, the CNCA developed a five-year national strategy to counter threats posed by IEDs covering the period 2023–27.²⁰ Intended actions were set out in a three-year work plan. The CNCA said that “improvised AP mines being a new threat for Burkina Faso, all national structures working towards the implementation of the APMBC lack technical and financial resources, as well as adequate training”. Despite efforts at national level and the

support of technical and financial partners to train and equip national stakeholders, Burkina Faso said it requires further assistance to fulfil its Article 5 obligations.²¹

UNMAS first deployed in Burkina Faso in 2019 as part of the UN Secretary-General’s Emergency Task Force, and then established a presence following a request from the Government and the UN Resident Coordinator. In 2023, UNMAS focused on two key areas: the protection of civilians, through awareness-raising of the threat of IEDs, capacity-building for humanitarian aid workers, and coordination of the mine action area of responsibility (MA AoR); and the strengthening of national capacities. It supported the development of four additional NMAS and the elaboration of the five-year national strategy. UNMAS has also been supporting the FDS by conducting a training of trainers in detection of IEDs and training FDS personnel in IED neutralisation and destruction. It has provided relevant equipment to the FDS.²²

Since October 2023, MAG has been implementing capacity-building activities with German Federal Foreign Office funding. On 29–31 May 2024, a regional workshop was held in Ouagadougou with representatives from Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria to discuss the way States newly affected by mines of an improvised nature could fulfil their APMBC obligations and share good practices. Focus was made on information management, advocacy, and risk education.²³

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The five-year national strategy identifies the need to better integrate gender and disability considerations in the fight against IEDs, which must be inclusive, in line with the spirit of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (on women, peace, and security) and Resolution 2250 (on youth, peace, and security).²⁴ Burkina Faso has a national gender strategy for 2020–24 and a dedicated ministry, the Minister of Solidarity, Humanitarian Action, National Reconciliation, Gender and Family.²⁵

UNMAS conducted a study on gender inclusion in mine action as part of its support to the FDS. The major challenge identified was the low percentage of women within the FDS and the few opportunities available and offered to women. Recommendations were made to increase women’s participation in mine action, focusing on risk education. In 2023, the first woman completed EOD Level 2 training.²⁶ Burkina Faso has shared gender-disaggregated data on the risk education programme’s recipients.²⁷

18 Email from Stéphane Lombela, Regional Programme Manager, MAG, 5 August 2024.

19 Article 7 Report (covering 2022 and 2023), p. 6; and interview with Intendant Col.-Maj. Anselme Sanou, CNCA, in Geneva, 29 April 2024.

20 SNLC-EEI – “Stratégie Nationale de Lutte Contre les Engins Explosifs Improvisés au Burkina Faso 2023-2027”.

21 Article 7 Report (covering 2022 and 2023), p. 12.

22 Email from Halimatou Toure, UNMAS, 19 June 2024.

23 Email from François Fall, HMA Advisor for West Africa, MAG, 5 August 2024.

24 Burkina Faso, National IED Strategy 2023–27, p. 22.

25 Ibid., p. 25.

26 Emails from Halimatou Toure, UNMAS, 19 June and 5 August 2024.

27 Article 7 Report (covering 2022 and 2023), p. 11.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known if the environment is taken into consideration when planning and tasking EOD in order to minimise potential harm associated with operations. The environment is mentioned in Burkina Faso's national strategy and work plan, but in relation to the management of agricultural fertilisers and other physico-chemical products and substances. Burkina Faso plans to set up an "environmental police" to control the import, export, and use of the chemicals that can serve as precursors of IEDs.²⁸

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Burkina Faso developed an International Mine Action Standards (IMAS)-compliant national standard on information management with the support of UNMAS in 2022.²⁹ Information on incidents comes from a variety of sources, including the FDS and humanitarian organisations' community liaisons. The CNCA has set up a toll-free number to collect information regarding the presence of IEDs.³⁰

In 2023, the CNCA created a national mine action database, but data collection, analysis, and sharing processes have not yet been formalised and the database is not yet functioning. In the meantime, UNMAS manages a database of IED incidents and shares relevant information with humanitarian operators as well as with the CNCA.³¹ The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) has no existing plans to support the deployment of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) in Burkina Faso.³²

PLANNING AND TASKING

In 2023, Burkina Faso developed its first national strategy to counter the threat from IEDs, covering 2023 to 2027. The strategy was elaborated and adopted by the CNCA and the relevant national stakeholders and is now awaiting validation by the Council of Ministers.³³ Pending validation, UNMAS and the CNCA have organised workshops to publicise the strategy in five regions, aiming to inform the relevant State authorities and civil society organisations on the strategy's objectives, the associated work plan, and the budget required.³⁴

The strategy is in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 72/36 of 4 December 2017 on countering the threat from IEDs. It aims to reduce incidents within communities and enable the return of displaced populations. It is framed around four strategic priorities: i) Strengthening the legal and institutional framework; ii) Building the capacities of stakeholders engaged in countering IEDs; iii) Fostering regional and international cooperation; and iv) Coordination and steering of the strategy.³⁵

The total cost is budgeted at 12.3 billion CFA (approximately €18.8 million).³⁶ The national strategy stated that the government would be the primary source of funding through an annual budget allocation from the various ministries and institutions responsible for implementing the strategic plan. Other sources of funding included technical and financial partners, regional and municipal authorities, and local and international NGOs, as well as the private sector.³⁷ But Burkina Faso has not indicated how much will be covered by national contributions and how much will be sought from international donors. The strategy was further detailed in a three-year costed work plan, where the second strategic priority, which includes detection and neutralisation of IEDs, is estimated at 6.7 billion CFA (€10.23 million).³⁸ But due to the political situation in Burkina Faso, many donors have suspended their support to the national authorities.³⁹

28 Burkina Faso, National IED Work Plan, 2023–2025, p. 21.

29 Email from Halimatou Toure, UNMAS, 19 June 2024.

30 Article 7 Report (covering 2022 and 2023), pp. 8 and 9.

31 Interview with Intendant Col.-Maj. Anselme Sanou, CNCA, in Geneva, 29 April 2024.

32 Email from Jérémy Répond, Programme Officer, GICHD, 24 July 2024.

33 Burkina Faso, National IED Strategy 2023–2027, Preface from the Prime Minister, p. iv.

34 Email from Halimatou Toure, UNMAS, 19 June 2024.

35 Burkina Faso, National IED Strategy 2023–2027, Résumé, pp. v, vi, and 1.

36 Ibid., p. 42. CNCA provided Mine Action Review with a different figure than the one in the strategy, indicating a budget of 13.8 billion CFA (approximately €21 million).

37 Ibid.

38 Burkina Faso, National IED Work Plan 2023–2025, p. 59.

39 Email from Halimatou Toure, UNMAS, 19 June 2024.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Burkina Faso has 12 approved NMAS: the Burkinabe Mine Action Standards (NOBAM). Existing standards comprised a glossary of terms and definitions, explosive ordnance risk education, information management and reporting, accreditation of organisations involved in risk education, NTS, community liaison, victim assistance, and task allocation procedures. In 2023, four additional NOBAM were developed with the support of UNMAS: EOD, national stockpile destruction planning, animal detection systems, and IED disposal.⁴⁰

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

The EOD unit of the defence and security forces has sole responsibility for locating and destroying mines and IEDs. This is mainly done as part of ongoing military operations. The unit is deployed to regions with elevated security threats and is supported by army combat engineers.⁴¹

UNMAS's team is composed of eight staff, three of whom are women. In 2023, UNMAS trained 68 people in the neutralisation and destruction of IEDs (Counter IED, EOD Level 2, and intervention-IED), including the first woman qualified to EOD Level 2 in Burkina Faso. UNMAS also conducted training of trainers for 20 staff in IED search and detection and a further 182 staff in IED risk awareness.⁴²

A mine detection dog breeding centre has been established and a demining training centre was constructed in 2023 with the support of Germany.⁴³ As at August 2024, the centre was almost completed; the army engineers said it was only missing some items of equipment though it was seeking additional training.⁴⁴

Burkina Faso is a member of the GICHD Francophone Regional Cooperation Programme and one CNCA representative

attended its annual workshop that last took place in October 2023 at the "Centre de Perfectionnement aux Actions de Déminage et de Dépollution" (CPADD) in Benin. It covered three topics: IEDs, risk education, and ammunition management.⁴⁵

Currently no international or national NGOs are conducting mine survey or clearance in Burkina Faso. Since 2021, HI has been implementing risk education and armed violence reduction projects in various regions.⁴⁶ MAG started operating in Burkina Faso in 2015, focusing on weapon and ammunition management (WAM). It has been supporting the CNCA to put in place a five-year national action plan to counter the threat from SALW, which was in the final stages of approval at the time of writing. Since 2022, MAG has been providing risk education to humanitarian personnel expanded to communities in 2023 through a small regional IED risk education project, funded by Norway, and implemented by a national partner. The project targets populations and humanitarian workers in four regions across three States: Cascades in Burkina Faso, Maradi in Niger), and Gao and Timbuktu in Mali.⁴⁷

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2023

There is no land release process in Burkina Faso, only EOD spot tasks.⁴⁸ In its Article 7 report submitted in 2024, Burkina Faso said that from 2017 to March 2024, the IED neutralisation rate was approximately 30%, i.e. 217 incidents out of 729.⁴⁹ UNMAS indicated that among the 168 IED incidents recorded in 2023, 30% were neutralised (i.e. around 50), but cautioned that operational units do not always report detailed information.⁵⁰

40 Article 7 Report (covering 2022 and 2023), p. 8; and email from Halimatou Toure, UNMAS, 19 June 2024.

41 Presentations of Burkina Faso, Intersessional Meetings, 20 June 2023; and NDM27, Side event, 30 April 2024; and email from Halimatou Toure, UNMAS, 19 June 2024.

42 Email from Halimatou Toure, UNMAS, 19 June 2024.

43 Presentations of Burkina Faso, Intersessional Meetings, 20 June 2023; and NDM27, Side event, 30 April 2024; and email from Capt. Ollo Palenfo, Chef de service des mines et des explosifs, CNCA, 25 September 2023.

44 Email from Aboh Joel Yves, UNMAS, 5 August 2024.

45 Email from Jérémy Repond, GICHD, 18 June 2024.

46 Online interview with Marwan Nadim, Regional Specialist, HI, 24 April 2024.

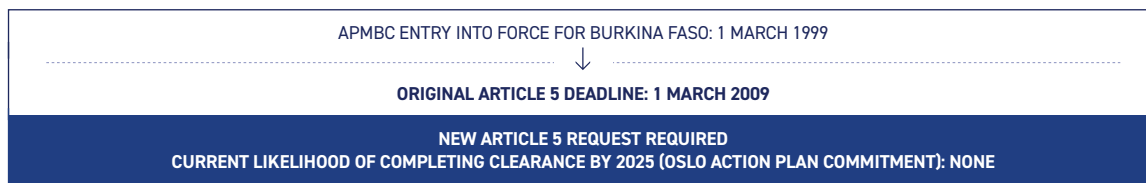
47 Online interview with Stéphane Lombela, MAG, 24 April 2024; and email from François Fall, MAG, 5 August 2024.

48 Interview with Intendant Col.-Maj. Anselme Sanou, CNCA, in Geneva, 29 April 2024.

49 Article 7 Report (covering 2022 and 2023), p. 9.

50 Email from Halimatou Toure, UNMAS, 19 June 2024.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC, Burkina Faso was required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control no later than 1 March 2009. In its initial transparency report in 2000, it stated that it was not affected by AP mines, but in June 2023, it informed States Parties at the APMBC intersessional meetings of new use of IEDs, including AP mines of an improvised nature, by NSAGs. In its latest Article 7 report covering January 2022 to December 2023, Burkina Faso reported that it is difficult to conduct NTS and TS in order to map incidents precisely. It also said, though, that monitoring of incidents is allowing the authorities to gain "an idea of the threat, the types of incidents in each area, and also the areas most threatened according to statistics". Burkina Faso provided very limited information on IED disposals.⁵¹

Burkina Faso should request a new extended Article 5 deadline, which should be for no more than two years, affording it the opportunity to conduct any necessary survey and provide an assessment of the extent of improvised AP mine contamination. The Committee on the Article 5 implementation encouraged Burkina Faso to submit an Article 5 deadline extension request by 31 March 2025 at the latest for consideration by the Twenty-Second Meeting of States Parties.⁵² It must also fulfil its reporting obligations under the APMBC, including by reporting on the status of programmes for the destruction of all AP mines, including of an improvised nature.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

It is not known whether Burkina Faso has plans in place to address residual contamination once its Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled.

⁵¹ Article 7 Report (covering 2022 and 2023), p. 3; and Committee on Article 5 implementation, Preliminary observations, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18–20 June 2024.

⁵² Committee on Article 5 implementation, "Preliminary Observations", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18–20 June 2024.