

General Overview of the Status of the Convention

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President of the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties**

Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends,

Introduction

It has been our practice that the Convention's President sets the scene for the meetings of the Standing Committees by providing an overview of the general status and operation of the Convention. It is my pleasure to proceed accordingly at this meeting.

It has now been over a decade since our Convention entered into force. The story of our Convention during this period has been one of successful international cooperation, effective multilateralism and national responsibility.

We have accomplished much over the past decade toward the fulfilment of our ultimate, but achievable, promise of an end, for all people for all time, of the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.

Despite the progress made, it is clear that the pursuit of our core aims is a challenging, difficult and long-term task. I am confident, however, that the spirit of cooperation that has persisted in the work of this Convention for over a decade will enable us to overcome these challenges.

Universalisation

With respect to universalization, at the close of the 9MSP, 39 States were not yet parties to the Convention and this number remains the same today. In fact, no State has ratified or acceded to the Convention since November 2007. Clearly our task is not yet complete. This was recorded in the *Geneva Progress Report*, where it is stated that in the period leading to the Second Review Conference, we should:

- direct specific efforts towards encouraging progress by those States not parties which have indicated that they could ratify or accede to the Convention in the near-term, and,
- increase universalisation efforts targeting those States not parties that continue to use, produce, or possess large stockpiles of anti-personnel mines.

I have made universalization one of my top priorities during my Presidency. I believe it is imperative to do so. Two (2) of the 39 States that have not accepted our Convention, Poland and the Marshall Islands, more than a decade ago signed the Convention thereby indicating their support for the object and purpose of the Convention and their intent to ratify at a later day. My hope is that that day will come soon. It is time that these two States in particular took care

of the unfinished business of formally adhering to the Convention, ideally prior to the Second Review Conference. I have written to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to express this message and I intend to visit Poland to do the same.

Of the 39 States not parties, many possess anti-personnel mines and / or are suffering the consequences of the use of mines. I am also committed to promoting accession to the Convention by these States. In March I travelled to the Lao Peoples Democratic Republic, next week I will visit Armenia and Georgia and if possible I hope later this year to engage senior officials in the capitals of Lebanon, Mongolia, Nepal and the United States.

Stockpile Destruction

With regard to stockpile destruction, compliance issues remain an urgent and difficult challenge to the Convention. While the list remains short in terms of the number of States Parties for which Article 4 remains relevant, the challenges relating to implementation are more profound than ever before.

Three States Parties, including two with great means, did not respect their deadlines for the destruction of their stocks. A fourth State Party has already indicated that it risks missing its deadline. My hope is that the European Commission will work in a flexible, creative and persistent manner to conclude cooperation arrangements with two of these States to ensure that mines will be destroyed. To those States that do not require outside assistance in the destruction of your stocks, I appeal to you to ensure that you are no longer non-compliant by the time of the Second Review Conference.

Non-compliance is extraordinary and calls for extraordinary measures to be taken, including those that concern transparency. I would therefore call upon the non-compliant States Parties to regularly keep us informed of your progress and whether any additional progress towards compliance are being encountered.

Mine clearance

With respect to mine clearance, I look forward to celebrating great success with several States Parties on the verge of being able to declare completion of the implementation of Article 5. Completion of these obligations would provide us with great momentum as we proceed on the road to Cartagena and the Second Review Conference.

For many other States Parties, however, implementation of Article 5 has proceeded slowly. We cannot turn back the hands of time. But we can, from this point forward, apply the knowledge that we have amassed to accelerate Article 5 implementation.

We are now well aware of how in many instances Landmine Impact Surveys have distorted the nature, size and location of the implementation challenge. We must both cease to repeat the errors of the past and apply the lessons that we have learned to more efficiently deploy expensive clearance assets.

Therefore, in addition to chairing the group of States Parties that has been mandated to analyse extension requests submitted this year by three States Parties under Article 5 of the Convention, I will give due attention to other States Parties in the process of implementing Article 5. In this context, I am pleased to see that the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance

will give special attention to the steps taken by those 15 States Parties that have already been granted request.

Victim assistance

With regard to victim assistance, I hope that as President I can contribute to encouraging greater national ownership by all relevant States Parties. This will be essential for States Parties that have reported to be ultimately responsible for significant numbers of survivors, to demonstrate real progress by the time of the Second Review Conference.

Progress in victim assistance should be specific, measurable and time-bound, with concrete measures logically needing to be determined by individual States Parties based on their diverse circumstances.

I call on relevant States Parties that have not yet done so to provide explicit ways to assess progress by the time of the Second Review Conference. In particular, actions should draw on achieving positive results towards the achievement of the full and effective participation and inclusion of mine survivors, including men, women, boys and girls, in the social, cultural, political and economic life of their communities.

Other matters essential for achieving the Convention's aims

In terms of other matters essential for achieving the Convention's aims, I would note that cooperation and assistance remains the heart and soul of our Convention. Cooperation implies partnership. Therefore, I call upon those in a position to do so to continue to fulfil your obligations to provide assistance to other States Parties that need it. International assistance, however, must be seen in the context of how it reinforces national efforts. Therefore, to those seeking assistance, I also call upon you to increase national ownership and develop a clear plan towards the fulfilment of your obligations.

Concerning transparency and effective exchange of information, and preventing and suppressing prohibited activities, we should recall that we are obliged to provide annual transparency reports and to take legislative and other measures to prevent and suppress prohibited activities. Too many States Parties have not fulfilled these obligations but we have the chance to improve the record of compliance prior to the Second Review Conference. We should also recall our commitment to be transparent through informal means, including by sharing information at the meetings taking place this week. I look forward to updates and discussions on a variety of matters later today and in coming days.

Finally, concerning implementation support, we continue to be well-served by the mechanisms that exist pursuant to the decisions of the States Parties, or that have emerged informally. Those mechanisms are efficient, enabling initiatives and participation of all States Parties, but there are not inexpensive.

I look forward to announcements on Friday concerning commitments we made in Nairobi to continue to provide the necessary financial resources for the Implementation Support Unit - and to contribute to the Sponsorship Programme in order to increase the level of representation at the Second Review Conference.

Thank you.