

Statement by the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies

(Greece and Nigeria)

1 December 2010

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It has truly been a very interesting and rewarding experience for Greece and Nigeria to have served as the first Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance since the Cartagena Summit.

We had big shoes to fill, given the excellent work of our predecessors, Argentina and Australia. We hope we have met your expectations.

During our term, we have placed a priority on promoting the application of the Cartagena Action Plan by those States Parties still in the process of implementing Article 5.

We have witnessed some great achievements, with one State Party having completed implementation of Article 5 and with others that have signaled that they too will do the same.

Momentum is on our side. We are now down from 54 to 38 States Parties that must still render all mined areas safe for normal human activity.

This momentum gained during the Cartagena Summit and the guidance provided by the Cartagena Action Plan have steered States Parties in the right direction and we look forward to continued progress in ridding the world of this insidious weapon.

We must recall, however, that many of the 38 States Parties that must still implement Article 5 face great challenges.

This year we have seen 6 of these States Parties request more time to complete implementation of Article 5. We hope that they will proceed apace in fulfilling the commitments they have made in their extension requests and that others will provide assistance.

While the work of the Standing Committee has brought to light all that has been accomplished by the States Parties, it has also highlighted that

there is still a long way to go before we can realize the mine clearance objectives of the Convention.

In passing the torch to our successors, Colombia and Switzerland, we are also passing on to them the need to stimulate more progress in a number of key areas, three of which we wish to mention.

First: We must remember that being granted an extension does not mean the end of a process but a new beginning. In preparing extension requests States Parties make renewed commitments to take some concrete steps leading to fulfillment of their obligations.

Once States Parties have been granted extensions, we must recall the agreement we made in Cartagena that these States Parties will complete implementation of Article 5 as soon as possible but not later than their extended deadlines, ensure progress toward completion proceeds in accordance with the commitments made in their extension requests and the decisions taken on their requests, and, that they will report regularly on such progress.

Second: We must recall that in Action 14 of the Cartagena Action Plan we agreed:

- that States Parties in the process of implementing Article 5 will identify, if they have not yet done so, the precise perimeters and locations of all areas under their jurisdiction or control in which anti-personnel mines are known or are suspected to be emplaced, and,
- that these States Parties will report this information as required, no later than this 10MSP.

We know that for many States Parties, including some of those requesting extensions, this has not yet been done. We encourage our successors to follow up on this matter.

And third: A key challenge concerns our recognition that demonstrating national ownership makes it significantly more likely that cooperation will flourish between those with needs and those in a position to provide assistance.

I will at this point hand over to my Greece colleague, who thou new (replacing a gentleman – George) is eager to come into the main

**stream of the work of the Convention. Mr. Yannis MALLIKOURTIS,
you have the floor**

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In Cartagena we defined national ownership as including:

- high level interest and leadership in fulfilling mine clearance obligations,
- an empowered national demining authority,
- a clear understanding of the size, location and quality of the Article 5 implementation challenge,
- a realistic but not unambitious plan to complete implementation of Article 5 as soon as possible and,
- a regular significant national financial commitment to the State's own humanitarian demining programme.

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We encourage our successors to continue to emphasise the importance we attached in Cartagena to national ownership.

In closing, let us thank Colombia and Switzerland for the support they provided to us as Co-Rapporteurs as well as all States Parties that are implementing Article 5 for their ongoing dedication in fulfilling of the our Convention's core aims.

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