

FINAL

11MSP

Norway Statement on Mine Clearance

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you Mr President

First I would like to congratulate Burundi and Nigeria on their declaration of compliance with Article 5.1, and commend Guinea-Bissau for their efforts that will result in Article 5 compliance soon. We also look forward to Jordan, Denmark and Uganda declaring that they are in compliance with their article 5 commitments before their deadline end.

Landmine Monitor reports that some 200 square kilometers of mined areas was cleared last year, a new record. While this is encouraging, we know that progress is still not as good as it should be and that too many States Parties with Article 5 obligations are behind their own clearance schedules. Unless the rate of clearance of mined areas is significantly increased, we can already project that there will be more extension requests, both for a second and even a third round in the years to come. We have to ask ourselves what implications this will have for the Convention as a whole.

The Convention is made and implemented in a spirit of cooperation and engagement. This is demonstrated also through the detailed decisions on extension requests in the past – which are meant to assist and encourage States Parties to enhance implementation of their national plans. We are concerned that some States Parties that have been granted extensions choose to overlook the parts of the extension decisions that describe our expectations to their actual implementation of these plans.

Access to international funding is clearly one significant factor for ensuring mine clearance progress, and implementation of Article 6 on Cooperation and Assistance is our tool for providing that. According to Landmine Monitor, mine action funding increased last year both from international donors and from the United Nations. However, as many states face a number of financial constraints and are forced to implement far-reaching austerity measures, this situation is likely to change. This only reinforce the need to increase effectiveness and efficiency on all levels of mine clearance sooner rather than later.

But lack of international funding may not be the sole reason for the lack of progress in mine clearance. Based on what is reported at this meeting it also seems that too many mine-affected States Parties started too late and need to act faster to fulfil their Article 5 obligations. To reverse this negative trend, we need to see strong leadership from all those states who have responsibility for clearing mined areas on their own territories.

Twelve years ago the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, which specifically *emphasised* "... the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and

girls.” All recipients of Norwegian mine action funding are required to report on how they implement Resolution 1325 and other measures to ensure gender equality. So far, reporting on this has been fairly general. From now on we will expect more specific reporting from our partners, with clear indicators and verifiable actions to ensure equal access for all to the resources provided by mine action. With this we want to provide stronger incentives for our mine action partners to take gender equality seriously.

Mr President

We would like to commend Germany for their prompt report to States Parties as soon as they established that the Witstock test firing range might also contain anti-personnel mines. We would also like to thank Hungary for providing us with comprehensive information about the suspected mined areas in the border areas with Croatia, but we would have expected that such information was shared with States Parties as soon as possible, and not so long after the suspected mined areas were discovered. However, we are encouraged by the transparency demonstrated by both Germany and Hungary at this meeting and their willingness to address the situation as soon as possible.

The Convention is silent on how to address situations where States Parties who never have reported Article 5 obligations, discover previously unknown mined areas. We believe that we will face similar situations several times in the years to come, and therefore States Parties need to develop a rational response to them that is firmly anchored within the object and purpose of the Convention, in a manner that do not undermine the legal obligations to clear all mined areas as soon as possible, and without becoming a de facto loophole in the Convention.

To ensure that this issue is given the priority it deserves, we would suggest that the 11 MSP President initiate a process of consultations with all relevant stakeholders, including the ICRC and the ICBL, with a view to have a constructive discussions at the Intersessionals. This process should aim at producing concrete recommendations on how such situations are best dealt within in the framework of the Convention, and present these for States Parties consideration at the 12 MSP. Without prejudging the outcome of such consultations, we believe that such recommendations should seek to encourage transparency, early reporting to the States Parties and provisions for ensuring that these mined areas are cleared and released as soon as possible.

Thank you