

12th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
ICBL Statement on Stockpile Destruction and Retention
6 December 2012



Thank you Mr. President.

Destroying all stockpiled antipersonnel mines is still a challenge for a few States Parties -- but it should also remain a preoccupation for all States Parties, because it is a matter of compliance with a core treaty obligation. The Mine Ban Treaty is a bright star in the arena of humanitarian disarmament, and overall its preventative measures like stockpile destruction have been a great success. But the three cases of ongoing non-compliance with the stockpile destruction deadline – Belarus, Greece, and Ukraine – are casting a heavy shadow on the near-perfect record of the past and need to be tackled to prevent lasting damage to the treaty's credibility. We need all States Parties to pay careful attention to stockpile destruction challenges in order to ensure these cases are soon put behind us.

We take note of the efforts made by Belarus, Greece and Ukraine, and we thank them for the updates provided today. We know each country is struggling with unique challenges and is not willfully contravening the treaty. We are, however, especially concerned that Belarus and Greece are not currently actively destroying stockpiles, and that Ukraine is only destroying relative small numbers thus far, and we are especially concerned that none of them has an expected completion date. We again call on all states and organizations that can or are currently supporting these states to work with them on the most efficient route to completing destruction.

We welcome Greece's decision to take the necessary steps to begin stockpile destruction now rather than wait for the ongoing lawsuit to be resolved. This is a good sign of Greece's commitment to come back into compliance with Article 4 as soon as possible. We hope that the negotiations with EAS will lead to the contract being revised quickly and for destruction to begin with the shortest possible delay, and for completion to occur in the shortest time possible.

We are pleased to hear that Belarus is reaching the final stage of the preparatory process of its stockpile destruction project and that actual destruction will start in the first half of next year. We hope Belarus together with the other concerned parties will make a maximum effort to finish with the shortest possible delay. We hope by the intersessionals it will be in a position to announce a final completion date.

We thank Ukraine for the update indicating progress toward destruction of part of its PFM mines – and especially the news that larger scale destruction should begin soon. The current plan definitely represents a major step in the right direction. However, as we understand it, the current agreement only covers the destruction of about half of the 6 million stockpiled PFM mines, and does not cover the other half, or the stockpile of 149,096 POM-2 mines. It would be useful for Ukraine provide additional details about how it intends to address the destruction of all its stocks.

We welcome the updates by Guinea-Bissau and South Sudan on the status of their stockpiled antipersonnel mines discovered in 2011 or earlier. But, it is regrettable that these very small

quantities of mines have not been destroyed in a more timely manner, as there do not appear to be serious obstacles. We now encourage them to destroy the mines as a matter of urgency and to report back to states immediately on their destruction.

We appreciate that Cote d'Ivoire shared information on newly discovered stockpiled antipersonnel mines, and, if we understand correctly, has started to destroy the mines and is committed to rapid destruction of the remainder. We hope that Cote d'Ivoire will provide States Parties with additional information on the numbers and types of mines found and destroyed as soon as possible.

We also hope to hear a clarification from Somalia about whether it has a stockpile and what steps have been taken to search for any possible unknown stocks given the ongoing conflict.

We welcome the news from Finland on Monday that it plans to destroy its stockpile before its deadline, and we encourage it to avoid any last minute problems by beginning the work as quickly as possible. Under the Cartagena Action Plan, States Parties should put a plan in place within a year of joining and begin destruction within two years.

Finally Mr. President, we understand that the issue of mines retained for training is to be addressed under this agenda item, though no State Party has yet done so. We would like to recall our concern about the implementation of Article 3 of the Mine Ban Treaty by a significant number of States Parties. The ICBL believes that states that are retaining mines but not using them for permitted purposes are abusing the exception of Article 3. Yet, numerous states are retaining mines without using them for permitted purposes; the mines are in effect simply sitting in stocks. This has reached the stage where this should be seen as a compliance issue.

We urge all states retaining mines to review the number of mines you retain and to ensure it is the minimum number absolutely needed for training and research activities. We urge you to destroy any mines above this number, and report back to other States Parties.

Thank you.