

The European Union

Joint Action

in support of the AP

Mine Ban Convention

Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction



1. THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE AP MINE BAN CONVENTION

The European Union has a long history of providing political and financial support for ending the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines. In as early as a May 1995 Council decision (95/170/CFSP), the EU agreed “to help combat the indiscriminate use and spread throughout the world of anti-personnel land mines”.

In November 1997, the EU Council welcomed the September adoption of the Convention, stating that “the Union is committed to the goal of total elimination of anti-personnel landmines worldwide as well as to contributing to solving the problems already caused by these weapons,” and spoke of “continued political efforts by the Union in pursuit of these objectives,” common moratoria on transfers and production of antipersonnel mines, and “a multi-faceted contribution by the Union to mine clearance and related activities” (97/817/CFSP).



In addition, the EU has repeatedly restated its commitment to the Convention at the Convention’s annual formal meetings, including at the 2004 First Review Conference, the *Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World*. At this event, the EU stressed “the European Union’s resolve to eliminate the landmine threat completely – by promoting universality, destroying stockpiles, clearing mines and assisting victims,” and, called for a continuation of “concerted action until the very last anti-personnel mine has been removed from the face of the earth and the target of zero new landmine victims has been reached.”

In 2008, the EU sought to build upon its longstanding Convention support and to do so in the context of its December 2003 adoption of a European Security Strategy. This strategy calls for an international order based on effective multilateralism. The European Union Joint Action in support of the universalisation and implementation of the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction was adopted in June 2008.

2. EU JOINT ACTION IN SUPPORT OF THE AP MINE BAN CONVENTION

A “Joint Action” is a coordinated effort of all EU Member States which features resources deployed to achieve objectives defined by the EU’s Council of Ministers. The EU Joint Action in support of the AP Mine Ban Convention specifically supports the preparations of its Second Review Conference, the *Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World*.

To achieve this objective, the EU has committed € 1,070,000 to carry out two types of activities over a 21 month period:

- > the organisation of up to six regional or sub-regional workshops or conferences aiming at increasing adherence to the Convention and preparing States Parties for the Second Review Conference
- > carrying out up to 25 targeted technical assistance visits to States Parties to provide advice on full implementation of the Convention

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit (ISU) – the mandated support structure to the Convention and its States Parties – was selected as the technical implementer of the Joint Action.



3. REGIONAL WORKSHOPS / CONFERENCES

To date, the ISU has supported five States Parties to the Convention in convening regional workshops or conferences. These events focused on universalisation and implementation in Africa, the Americas, Central Asia, South East Asia and South Eastern Europe. They provided an opportunity on a regional basis to assess progress made and challenges that remain. In doing so these events have contributed significantly to the success of the Convention's Second Review Conference.

In total, 140 States were invited to these workshops with 88 participating. This included the workshops and conferences engaging a large number of States not parties. The following States not parties participated: Azerbaijan, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Libya, Myanmar, Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, United States of America and Vietnam.



In keeping with the Convention's culture of openness, transparency and collaboration, the participation of other actors was warmly welcomed. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines and dozens of its member organisations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and United Nations agencies and departments actively participated in all workshops.

Important contributions were also provided by other actors such as: the African Union, the Organisation of American States, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance, the Institute for Security Studies and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

At four of the five regional events, a parallel programme was organized for healthcare, rehabilitation and disability rights experts. These parallel programmes, also involving field visits to medical care and rehabilitation facilities, provided a regional level opportunity for experts to share experiences and good practices in addressing the rights and needs of landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities.

3. REGIONAL WORKSHOPS / CONFERENCES

The Managua Workshop on Achieving a Mine-Free Americas | 24-26 February 2009

This workshop focused on progress in the pursuit of the Convention's aims in the Americas, where all but two States have ratified or have acceded to the Convention.

The workshop featured the participation of all States Parties in the region that are still in the process of fulfilling Article 5 mine clearance obligations, and all of those responsible for significant numbers of landmine survivors.

The Managua Workshop:

- > featured Nicaragua affirming that it is on track to completing its mine clearance obligations in 2010. This will result in Central America being a region where all known mined areas have been made available for normal human activity
- > highlighted the importance placed on the need for reinvigorating cooperation in the context of the Convention and in doing more to respond to the needs of women, men, girls and boys who have fallen victim to mines

This input, repeated at subsequent workshops, reaffirmed to the President-Designate of the Second Review Conference that a special emphasis should be placed on these matters at the *Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World*.



3. REGIONAL WORKSHOPS / CONFERENCES

The Bangkok Workshop on Achieving a Mine-Free South-East Asia | 1-3 April 2009

This workshop highlighted the significant challenges remaining in the pursuit of the Convention in South East Asia, and on the part of many ASEAN Member States and neighbouring countries. In South East Asia, Cambodia and Thailand will require at least a decade more to complete implementation of their Article 5 mine clearance obligations and both are responsible for the wellbeing, and guarantee of the rights, of significant numbers of landmine survivors. In addition, several South East Asian States are not yet parties to the Convention.

The Bangkok Workshop:

- > highlighted the value of States Parties using the full range of technical and non technical means to release, with confidence, suspected hazardous areas
- > sought to address perceived barriers to accession to the Convention
- > emphasised the central importance of cooperation and assistance for the Convention and the need for national ownership to ensure successful cooperation



The Dushanbe Workshop on Achieving a Mine-Free Central Asia | 7-8 July 2009

This workshop highlighted the remaining challenges in ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines in Central Asia. Afghanistan and Tajikistan continue to clear mines and assist victims. In addition, some States in this region remain steadfast in their reluctance to accede to the Convention. A particular lesson from the workshop concerned the importance of partnership in implementation. This was illustrated by a wide range of actors involved in supporting the national efforts of Afghanistan and Tajikistan, including non-governmental, regional and other organisations, various UN offices and agencies and States in a position to provide assistance.

The Dushanbe Workshop:

- > appealed for the *Cartagena Summit* to be used for States Parties to strengthen national ownership and for others to reaffirm their commitment to provide assistance to those who have done so
- > made efforts to address perceived remaining barriers to accession on the part of States not parties
- > concluded with an expression that the world would be a better place if all States in Central Asia joined the common effort to end the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines

3. REGIONAL WORKSHOPS / CONFERENCES

The Third Continental Conference of African Experts on Landmines | 9-11 September 2009

EU Joint Action support enabled South Africa to host, under the auspices of the African Union, the Third Continental Conference of African Experts on Landmines. This repeated the 2004 effort when the Second Continental Conference was held to prepare African States for the *Nairobi Summit*. The Third Continental Meeting built on its success by ensuring that African States could have a vibrant discussion on issues that were of greatest concern for them.

These issues were contained in an updated African Common Position on Anti-Personnel Mines, which the conference recommended for adoption by AU Member States. This updated Common Position remarked that while great progress has been made in Africa in pursuing the aims of the Convention, more concerted efforts are required in order to:

- > ensure the full universalisation of the Convention in Africa
- > sustain and enhance current national demining programmes
- > enhance the assistance provided to mine victims
- > promote and strengthen intra-African co-operation and Africa's capacity in the field of mine clearance and victim assistance
- > further mobilize and efficiently use resources



The Tirana Workshop on Achieving a Mine-Free South Eastern Europe | 7-9 October 2009

This workshop focused on progress made and challenges that remain on the part of the States of South Eastern Europe that were subject to the impact of conflict in the 1990s. One highlight was the Albanian announcement that it had completed implementation of Article 5 of the Convention, having cleared all known mined areas.

The Tirana Workshop:

- > illustrated some of the Convention's greatest successes, in terms of the achievements that have been made in mine clearance, victim assistance, stockpile destruction and partnership and transparency in implementation
- > showed that compelling challenges remain with four States Parties in the region responsible for significant numbers of mine survivors and with two requiring a decade more to clear all mined areas
- > noted that the *Cartagena Summit* provides an opportunity for South Eastern Europe to take pride in what has been accomplished, to contribute to a stocktaking of what remains to be done, and to adopt a strong, forward-looking action plan

4. TECHNICAL ADVISORY VISITS

Technical advisory support efforts undertaken in the context of the EU Joint Action are intended to provide a short term visit by an expert to assist States in developing ways to address pressing implementation challenges. They are intended to complement, but not duplicate, ongoing capacity building efforts undertaken by others. To date, 11 visits have been undertaken.

Victim assistance

Afghanistan

In 2008, the Afghanistan National Disability Action Plan (ANDAP) was developed to improve the quality of life of mine survivors and other persons with disabilities. To enhance efforts the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) requested the ISU to facilitate a victim-assistance focused technical visit. In August 2008 an expert visited Afghanistan and assisted in the design of a mechanism to monitor implementation and assess progress in achieving the objectives of the ANDAP. The expert also assisted in raising awareness of the ANDAP and Afghanistan's victim assistance obligations under the AP Mine Ban Convention at the provincial level by participating in the Western Region Disability Workshop in Herat, and in drafting the agenda for the Third National Disability/Victim Assistance Workshop.

Guinea Bissau

To assist in acquiring information for a victim assistance status report to be presented at the *Cartagena Summit* and to support the identification of priorities for 2010-2014 to meet the needs of survivors, Guinea Bissau requested a victim assistance-focused technical visit. In August 2009, an expert visited Guinea Bissau, met with officials from all relevant ministries and provided advice on the basis of information obtained. A data-collection follow-up table was also provided to assist in obtaining key missing data and advice was given in order that a status report could be finalised in time for the *Cartagena Summit*.

Sudan

Sudan requested a victim assistance-focused ISU technical visit to raise awareness of the priorities and challenges as the victim assistance programme transitions from UN-supported activities to full national ownership by relevant ministries in north and south Sudan.

In February 2009 an expert visited Sudan to participate in the Third National Victim Assistance Workshop. The expert provided support and technical advice on the review of progress in achieving the objectives of Sudan's victim assistance work plan to assist in identifying priorities for future action in relation to victim assistance.

Uganda

In 2007, the Uganda Comprehensive Plan of Action to address the rights and needs of landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities for the period 2008-2012 was developed. To ensure that the Comprehensive Plan achieves its ultimate aim of improving the quality of life for mine survivors and other persons with disabilities, Uganda's Commissioner for Disability and the Elderly requested a technical visit. In September 2008 an expert visited Uganda and assisted in the design of a mechanism to monitor implementation and assess progress in achieving the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. The expert also assisted in raising awareness of the Comprehensive Plan and Uganda's obligations under the AP Mine Ban Convention in relation to victim assistance at relevant stakeholders' meetings at national and district level.



4. TECHNICAL ADVISORY VISITS

Zambia

At the 2004 *Nairobi Summit*, the States Parties agreed on a basis to act strategically with respect to their promise to landmine victims.

While Zambia does not figure among those States Parties that are responsible for significant numbers of survivors, it has sought to keep its promise to landmine survivors. Zambia requested that the ISU send an expert to assist Zambia in understanding the scope of its victim assistance challenges in the context of the Convention and to advise on victim assistance related services, structures and policies. A variety of recommendations were made by the expert who visited Zambia in March 2009. An underlying theme was that the *Zambian Mine Action Centre (ZMAC)* should seek to advance victim assistance efforts by working with and through government ministries concerned with disability, rather than taking a leading role itself. It was noted that the exception is victim data collection, where ZMAC can and should be the lead agency.

Mine clearance

Chad

In 2008 Chad was granted an extension on its deadline to clear all mined areas, based on its commitment to understand the true remaining extent of the challenge and to develop plans accordingly.

Chad requested expert advice in the use of all technical and non-technical methods to release, with confidence, suspected hazardous areas. In May 2009, an expert assessed factors such as operational and logistical constraints, the security situation, mine and UXO contamination and survey and clearance capacities. Recommendations were made to Chadian authorities, including that a non-technical survey is required to determine more accurately the size and location of remaining mined areas.

Guinea Bissau

With a deadline of 1 November 2011 to complete implementation of the Convention's Article 5 mine clearance obligations, Guinea Bissau needs to know in 2009 whether an extension request on its deadline is required. Following a request received by the ISU, an expert was deployed to Guinea Bissau in July 2009 to advise on a plan to achieve completion by its deadline. The mission concluded that with a more effective use of its clearance assets, the development and use of a survey capacity and with support from other parties, Guinea Bissau could achieve complete implementation by its deadline.

Nigeria

A party to the Convention since 2002, Nigeria reported for the first time in 2009 that there are areas under its jurisdiction and control suspected to contain anti-personnel mines.

An expert was sent to Nigeria to assist in clarifying its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention and to provide advice on the nature and extent of its implementation challenge. The mission recognised that within Nigeria there is a competent, professional and responsive organisation able to deliver what is needed to support the implementation of Article 5 and the destruction of other explosive hazards. The mission noted that based on existing operational plans, all known contaminated areas will be cleared by March 2010 – two years ahead of Nigeria's Article 5 deadline.

Uganda

In May 2009, Uganda requested technical expert advice on actions necessary to complete mine clearance by its 1 August 2009 deadline and on the preparation of a declaration of completion.



4. TECHNICAL ADVISORY VISITS

A visit by an expert in June 2009 assisted Uganda in clarifying that it would not be in a position to complete implementation by its mine clearance deadline. The mission also provided advice on promptly informing the States Parties of Uganda's situation and on preparing an extension request.

The mission also concluded that, subject to operational planning, the implementation challenge could be resolved in two to three years.

Transparency Reporting

Haiti

Since 2006, Haiti had been one of a handful of States Parties that remained non-compliant with its initial transparency reporting obligations.

Haiti requested ISU expert assistance in the preparation of an initial transparency report. An expert was deployed to brief Haiti's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on this reporting obligation and to assist in drafting its initial report. Soon after this mission took place, Haiti submitted its initial Article 7 transparency report, bringing the Convention as a whole close to a 100 percent compliance rate with this aspect of the Convention.



Stockpile destruction / universalisation

Mongolia

Following an April 2009 visit to Ulaanbaatar by the Coordinator of the Universalisation Contact Group and the Director of the ISU, Mongolia – a State not party to the Convention – requested support from the ISU for expertise in assessing its stockpile and advising on its destruction.

The request was made in the context of Mongolia's "step-by-step" path toward accession to the Convention. Mongolia had expressed that the next step would be such expert advice on its stockpile. In July 2009, an expert from the GICHD was commissioned to provide this expertise. A key conclusion of the mission was that the Mongolian Army is capable, with limited international financial and technical support, to successfully carry out the destruction of its stockpile of approximately 200,000 anti-personnel mines.

5. NEXT STEPS FOR THE EU JOINT ACTION

To date 5 workshops and 11 technical advisory visits have been undertaken. These activities have succeeded in ensuring that States on a regional basis could prepare for the *Cartagena Summit* and provide regionally-specific input to the Summit's President-Designate. They have engaged many States not parties to the Convention.

In addition, they have resulted in States Parties understanding, more clearly, ways to address implementation challenges. Between October 2009 and May 2010, when the Joint Action terminates, one additional regional workshop will be held and up to 14 more technical advisory missions will be undertaken to further advance the EU's objectives in support of the Convention.



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