

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

COMMITTEE ON THE ENHANCEMENT OF COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE (Sweden, Thailand, Turkey and the United Kingdom)

Intersessional Meetings, 22-24 May 2019

Purpose, mandate and organisation of the Committee

The Maputo Review Conference established the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance with the following purpose, “to assist the States Parties in the full implementation of Article 6 of the Convention, in line with their reaffirmation that ending the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines is a shared commitment”.

With this purpose in mind the Committee is mandated to, “promote cooperation and assistance under the Convention, facilitate the fostering of partnerships between States Parties seeking to receive assistance and those in a position to provide such assistance, and coordinate with other implementation mechanisms established by the States Parties in order to facilitate and accelerate the full implementation of the Convention”.

Since the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties (17MSP), the Chair of the Committee has convened 10 Committee meetings. These meetings included internal meetings of the Committee to discuss different aspects of the Committee’s work, as well as meetings with the different Committees of the Convention and meetings with diverse stakeholders. As a result of these consultations, the Committee outlined a programme of work that covers two main aspects of cooperation and assistance; strengthening partnerships and promotion of information sharing.

Strengthening Partnerships

Individualised Approach (IA)

As part of the Committee’s mandate to, in part, “facilitate the fostering of partnerships between States Parties seeking to receive assistance and those in a position to provide such assistance”, and in follow up to the recommendations contained in the conclusions of the Committee presented at the 17MSP, the Committee continued its work on the supporting the IA.

In this regard, the Committee took advantage of the United Nation’s Meeting of National Mine Action Programme Directors held on 5-8 February 2019 to:

- Meet with States that carried out IA meetings on the margins of 17MSP;
- Meet with States Parties that expressed interest in taking advantage of the IA;
- “Step back” and examine the value and shortcomings of the IA through a discussion with stakeholders.

The Committee met with two of the three States Parties that had participated in the IA during the 17MSP - Angola and Zimbabwe - to go over the final report and discuss follow-up actions.

Angola launched its IA meeting on the margins of the 17MSP, held in Geneva, 26-30 November 2018. In follow-up, Angola produced a newsletter to highlight its achievements in order to generate greater awareness on the mine action programme of Angola. During the IA, Angola shared with participants the national commitment of Angola to carrying out its obligations under the Convention, including information on its national financial commitment for the period of 2019-2025. Angola also highlighted the Provinces of Malanje and Huambo which may be declared “mine-free” in the near future. Angola welcomed the opportunity to build on the cooperation with existing partners and undertake new partnerships towards the achievement of the 2025 goal including through, for example, the development of a national strategy and continuous improvement of its information management.

Zimbabwe launched its second IA meeting on the margins of the 17MSP. During the meeting Zimbabwe indicated that a stakeholder gathering was held in Harare in March 2018 as a part of the launch of its national mine action strategy and in follow-up to the IA. Participants discussed, amongst other, the importance of engaging stakeholders located in Harare, in particular organizations such as the UNDP in order to formalise linkages between mine action and national development plans, notably the implementation of the sustainable development goals.

The Committee also took the opportunity to meet with States Parties that expressed interest in taking advantage of the IA on the margins of the 22-24 May 2019 intersessional meetings - Ecuador and Tajikistan – to begin coordination.

To date , the Committee has supported 7 States Parties in taking advantage of the IA since 2016 including Angola (2018), Croatia (2016), Serbia (2018), Sri Lanka (2018), Sudan (2018), Somalia (2018) and Zimbabwe (2017 and 2018). Taking advantage of the presence of representatives from many of these States and other important stakeholders, the Committee convened a meeting with the aim of examining the value of the IA and identifying improvements that could be made to the process. The key conclusions of the meeting were as follows:

- The IA is a valuable complement to the work of the Convention and offers a good opportunity for States Parties to share their progress and challenges with State and organisation and to share their needs for cooperation and assistance, an opportunity that is not presented in the plenary given the short time allotted to presentations from States Parties and discussions with States Parties;
- The IA should not be viewed as a one-off event but forms part of the State Party’s wider transparency, communication and resource mobilization efforts;
- Follow-up to the IA meetings is necessary in order to gain from the momentum generated during the meeting;
- Collaboration with national and international stakeholders in-country in the development and planning of the IA, including the agenda and presentations has proven extremely valuable;
- The IA cannot replace a lively and robust national dialogue, but should complement it.

During the conversations with stakeholders, the importance of improving and strengthening national coordination mechanisms and dialogue was emphasized many times by different stakeholders. Following this meetings, the Committee began its work in conceptualizing how to strengthen in country coordination through the establishment of National Mine Action Coordination Platforms.

National Mine Action Coordination Platforms

The Committee noted that the IA offers a platform for affected States Parties with obligations under the Convention, with a majority focusing on Article 5 implementation, to strengthen partnerships towards completion at a national level. The Committee foresees national actions as essential in follow-up to the IA at an international level.

In the Maputo Action Plan, the States Parties indicated that “States Parties in a position to provide assistance and those seeking to receive assistance, where relevant and to the extension possible, will enter into partnership for completion, with partners specifying their responsibilities to each other, articulating age-and gender-sensitive time bound objectives and targets, making financial or other commitments, if possible on a multi-year basis, and engaging regularly in a dialogue on progress and challenges in meeting goals.”

The Committee views this action of the Maputo Action Plan as critical in order to ensure that the States Parties, as a community, make significant progress towards achieving the 2025 ambitions of the States Parties and to do so in an inclusive, effective and efficient manner. In this regard the Committee recognized the importance of considering permanent in-country coordination mechanisms that includes all stakeholders including the National Mine Action Authority and National Mine Action Centre, donor countries, demining organizations, amongst other, and that meet on a regular basis to steer success of the national programme.

In the view of the Committee, in-country coordination mechanism could:

- enhance multi-stakeholder collaboration and coordination through a consultative and participatory process;
- foster an enabling environment for the conduct of mine action through advocacy and awareness-raising on the remaining challenges and plans for implementation as well as the importance of integrating mine action into development policies, planning and programmes and;
- facilitate the integration of mine action into national policies, planning and programmes in various development sectors as well as into international or bilateral development aid policies and programmes;
- identify needs, challenges and analyse progress of strategies and plans;
- provide a forum for national consultations and consensus building, priority identification and policy formulation, implementation and monitoring of activities with an emphasis on ensuring progress toward 2025.

In this regard, the Committee has provided an example of how country coordination system could be formatted (Annex I).

Information Sharing

Country web pages

As part of the Committee’s mandate to look at the use of information exchange tools to foster partnerships between States Parties, the Committee has been exploring ways in which it can assist

states in developing their country pages on the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention website to better facilitate cooperation and assistance, as well as the possibility of an online reporting tool.

The Committee recalls in its conclusions from presented by the Committee to the Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties in 2018 the development of an informal placemat of options for States country pages on the Convention's website that would enable, each state, on a voluntary basis, to select its preferred options and provide the required information in collaboration with the Implementation Support Unit and the Committee. The Committee remains ready to assist States Parties in this regard and encourages States Parties to share relevant information care of the Implementation Support Unit.

The Committee encourages States to visit their country websites and to, through the ISU, provide any addition information it may want to highlight concerning its national programme.

Online reporting tool

The Committee, in an effort to facilitate reporting on the part of States Parties and in an effort to encourage sharing of information continues to examine an online tool for Article 7 reporting.

In its conclusions presented to the 17MSP in 2018, the Committee indicated that an online tool for Article 7 reporting would not replace the option to provide reports through the current system, nor would it create additional reporting requirements. The Committee reiterates that the online tool for Article 7 reporting would mirror and complement the Guide to Reporting adopted by the States Parties at the Fourteenth Meeting of the States Parties. In addition to facilitating the submission of Article 7 reports, it is expected that an online reporting tool would assist in the analysis work of the Convention's Committees and therefore facilitate our collaborative work in the implementation of the Convention.

In this regard, the Committee, with the support of the ISU has been exploring other online reporting mechanisms which may provide example on how best to develop the tool.

The Committee intends to continue consultations to this end following the intersessional meetings with the aim to make available an online tool for presentation at the fourth Review Conference.

Conclusion

The Committee intends to continue its work to fulfil its mandate in line with the identified programme of work moving towards the Fourth Review Conference.

As the Committee indicated at the 17MSP, the IA continues to be an invaluable component of Cooperation and Assistance and, in this regard, the Committee will continue to review the IA with States that have participated together with civil society partners. The Committee recognises that the IA is not an end in itself. In this regard, the Committee in the lead up to the Fourth Review Conference will give specific focus to improving the effectiveness of follow-up activities at both international and national levels. In this way, the IA will not replace in-country stakeholder coordination mechanisms but can form part of overall efforts to keep international and national stakeholders informed of progress made, remaining challenges under the Convention and required support in a more detailed and consistent manner. The Committee remains committed to support States Parties.

The Committee will continue to review of the IA, noting the importance of strengthening national coordination mechanisms in support of the effective and efficient implementation of the Convention. The Committee looks forward to engaging States Parties and relevant civil society organisations on the annexed example of how country coordination system could be formatted.

In addition, the Committee encourages States Parties to continue sharing information, including the status of implementation, and, if relevant, its needs for cooperation and assistance, to better enable States to meet its obligations under the Convention, to the fullest extent possible, by 2025. As part of this work, the Committee will continue to develop an online reporting tool for presentation at the Fourth Review Conference.

Attachments

- National Mine Action Platforms – food for thought paper

National Mine Action Platform (NMAP)

Food for thought

Introduction

At the Third Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the States Parties adopted the Maputo +15 Declaration in which they agreed to intensify efforts to complete the Convention's respective time-bound obligations and to do so to the fullest extent possible by 2025. The Maputo Action Plan aimed for a more country focused approach to implementation and to support the ambitions of the States Parties as expressed in the Maputo +15 Declarations.

The Maputo Action Plan contains a number of Actions related to Cooperation and Assistance. The sentiment of a more country focused approach is captured by Action 21 of the Maputo Action Plan which indicates that *"States Parties in a position to provide assistance and those seeking to receive assistance, where relevant and to the extent possible, will enter into partnerships for completion, with partners specifying their responsibilities to each other, articulating age and gender-sensitive time-bound objectives and targets, making financial or other commitments, if possible on a multi-year basis, and engaging regularly in a dialogue on progress and challenges in meeting goals."*

Since this time, the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance has established the individualised approach to contribute to this effort by providing a platform for dialogue on the status and challenges faced by States Parties in the implementation of their obligations under the Convention. In addition to the individualized approach, it is clear that cooperation and assistance can be fostered through a variety of approaches including through the strengthening of in-country coordination and permanent dialogue between stakeholders. This brief paper lays out an example of a possible format for a national platform for mine action.

National Mine Action Platform

Mine action is often a crosscutting issue. It is clear that in order to address implementation by 2025 a high level of commitment from all stakeholders will be required.

A National Mine Action Platform (NMAP) that provides a platform for different actors in-country can be a valuable forum to discuss issues related to the Convention's implementation and to include other actors from outside the mine action community. The objective would be to link mine action with national development policies, planning and programme in order to support implementation of mine clearance and victim assistance commitments of the Convention. This is in keeping with the understanding that the contribution of mine action goes beyond our sector and supports humanitarian response, development and other matters.

The NMAP could be instrumental in ensuring:

- High level government support and commitment to advocate for mine action;
- the involvement of actors from a wide variety of disciplines including development actors and planners' to support the mainstreaming of mine action into development agendas (e.g. SDGs), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and international Assistance Frameworks (e.g. EU instruments);
- continuous dialogue and partnership with the international community, including the United Nations (UNDP, UNMAS, UNICEF), donors and regional and national authorities;

- participation of civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations, organization of persons with disabilities and other organizations from local communities, to contribute to the implementation of the commitments of the Convention and to ensure the inclusion of persons with disability and the voice of affected communities in the process;
- information sharing, knowledge exchange among members of the NMAP and Increase interaction between mine action actors with other relevant national, regional and international entities;
- Drawing in additional States in a position to provide support to the programme.

The NMAP

A NMAP may be viewed as a nationally owned and led forum of stakeholders from various disciplines that advocates for Mine Action at different levels and allowing for concerted action through a coordinated and participatory process.

Objectives of the NMAP

The goal of the NMAP is to ensure an inclusive approach to the implementation of the Convention by:

- facilitating multi-stakeholder collaboration and coordination through a consultative and participatory process;
- fostering an enabling environment for the conduct of mine action through advocacy and awareness-raising on the remaining challenges and plans for implementation as well as the importance of integrating mine action into development policies, planning and programmes;
- providing a forum for national consultations and consensus building, priority identification and policy formulation, implementation and monitoring of activities and identification of needs and challenges with an emphasis on ensuring progress toward 2025.

Principles of the NMAP

The States Parties have agreed that while each State Party is responsible for implementation of the Convention in areas under its jurisdiction or control, the Convention's shared goals can be advanced through enhanced cooperation.¹ The States Parties also understand the starting point to ensure effective cooperation and assistance is national ownership including:

- high level interest and leadership in fulfilling obligations and addressing challenges;
- an existing or new State entity empowered and provided with the human, financial and material capacity to carry out its responsibilities;
- a clear understanding of the challenge or a commitment to promptly acquire such an understanding;
- a realistic but not unambitious plan to address the challenges as soon as possible and;
- a regular significant national financial commitment by the affected State itself.

In addition to national ownership as defined above, in order to ensure the success of NMAP there will need to be certain principles established by participants such as:

- clarity that the implementation of the Convention is a national responsibility;

¹ Maputo Action Plan

- the NMAP must be inclusive and include different disciplines in order to ensure different perspectives and to take advantage of existing systems and mechanisms already in place;
- the NMAP must support progress and should be closely linked to planning, administration and decision-making processes in mine action.

In this context the NMAP needs to ensure a political, technical, participatory and resource mobilization components:

- a political component to ensure strong political commitment from the national authorities;
- a technical component to discuss technical challenges faced by the State Party including in areas such as: data management, methodologies, standard operating procedure, national mine action standards, tasking, prioritization etc..;
- a participatory component that involves relevant groups, including various government bodies, the private sector, NGOs and academic institutions;
- a resource mobilization component to ensure resources required for developing the NMAP and carrying out the mine action programmes planned tasks.

Composition of the National Mine Action Platforms (NMAP)

There is no set formula for the composition of a NMAP. The participation and buy-in of different actors from, for example, government ministries, donors, NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Private Sector (where applicable), Organization of Persons with Disabilities and the United Nations organizations could be facilitated.

The NMAP could be established by a tripartite approach with the National Authority necessarily taking the lead in facilitating the work of the NMAP, a “champion donor” country (e.g. rotating) and a third in-country entity (e.g. UNDP) which would carry out the role of a “secretariat” including, for example, the taking and circulation of minutes the sending of invitations on behalf of the National Authority. However, if the decision on its composition is made in an inclusive manner, it can ensure that the structure emplaced has the buy in necessary for its success.

The members of the NMAP can decide on the activities on the NMAP which may be, but not limited to, the following:

- identifying trends, gaps, concerns and challenges and setting forth accepted priority and look for opportunities to mobilize necessary resources;
- advocating the urgent need for developing or adopting policies, legislation and standards;
- benchmarking progress made and its mainstreaming into development policies, planning and programmes;
- contributing to the development of work plans and raising public awareness;
- improvising dialogue and coordinating joint efforts among members of the NMAP to more effectively carry out operations;
- documenting lessons learned and good practices, and share the findings at national, regional and international levels.