

STATEMENT BY NIGERIA

STANDING COMMITTEE ON MINE CLEARANCE

MONDAY 20 JUNE 2011

Co-Chairs:

Thank you for giving me the floor.

I would like to begin by expressing appreciation for your able leadership of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance which Nigeria had the privilege of co-chairing with Greece in 2010. We assure you of our full support in your important assignment.

At the 10MSP, we declared that, while it was believed that there were no longer areas under the jurisdiction or control of Nigeria that contained anti-personnel mines, verification efforts would continue.

Nigeria is pleased to declare today, that in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention we have ensured the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in areas under our jurisdiction or control in which these mines were known or suspected to be emplaced.

In keeping with the language used in the voluntary declaration of completion, adopted at the Seventh Meeting of the States Parties, we wish to state that, in the event that previously unknown mined areas are discovered, Nigeria will do the following:

- a. report such mined areas in accordance with its obligations under Article 7 and share such information through the Intersessional Work Programme, including the Standing Committee meetings;
- b. ensure the effective exclusion of civilians in accordance with Article 5; and,
- c. destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in these mined areas as a matter of urgent priority, making its needs for assistance known to other States Parties, as appropriate.

Nigeria's efforts to comply with Article 5 of the Convention involved surveying over 150,000 square kilometres in 11 of Nigeria's States.

In the course of complying with Article 5, a total of 820 anti-personnel mines, 325 anti-vehicle mines and 17,516 other explosive hazards were destroyed.

The fact that the main challenge faced by Nigeria concerned unexploded ordnance, points to how valuable this Convention is in ensuring that not only landmines are dealt with by affected countries, but that all other explosive remnants of war.

Nigeria knows that its Article 5 challenge was not as severe as that faced by other affected countries. However, compliance still required a considerable effort.

Co-Chairs, Colleagues

We are now in the process of working with the Implementation Support Unit in preparing a detailed, formal declaration of completion which Nigeria will submit to the Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties. We are particularly pleased with the mission of the Director of the ISU to Abuja in April where he had fruitful meetings with the Minister of Defence and with members of Nigeria's inter-ministerial committee on the implementation of the Convention.

We are pleased to state that we have benefited greatly from the ISU, through its mandate of providing advice and technical support to States Parties on the implementation of the Convention. We encourage all States Parties to fund this core activity of the ISU. On its part, Nigeria is considering the possibility of providing a voluntary contribution to the ISU in 2011. We also wish to make it known that a great deal of expertise exists within Nigeria on mine clearance and that this capacity is available for use by others.

Finally, Nigeria is proud to have become the 17th State Party to have completed implementation of Article 5 of the Convention and we look forward to formally presenting our declaration of completion at the 11MSP in Cambodia.

I thank you.