

President's Statement on the General Status of the Convention

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President of the Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties

**Meeting of the Standing Committee on the
General Status and Operation of the Convention**

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Excellencies, dear friends,

As the Co-Chairs have noted, it has been our practice that the President provides an overview of the general status of the Convention.

It is my pleasure to do so this year.

Universalization

With respect to universalization, I was delighted that Finland attended the 11MSP at the ministerial level and that the minister in question announced that Finland would accede to the Convention within weeks following the 11MSP.

Finland kept its word, depositing its instrument of accession on January 9th, thereby becoming the 159th State to join our movement.

My hope is that the momentum on universalization will continue.

Poland had previously indicated that it too would join the Convention in 2012 and I hope that it sticks to this promise.

As well, at the close of the 11MSP I stated that I too will do my part on universalization, in particular by seeking to further promote the Convention in South East Asia.

Last year I met at a high level with leaders from Singapore and Vietnam.

This year my hope at a minimum is to do the same with respect to Myanmar. Unfortunately a planned universalization visit to Myanmar earlier this month

did not materialise. I hope, however, to find another instance when I can engage Myanmar at a high level.

Stockpile destruction

With respect to stockpile destruction, the 11MSP served as an important milestone as Turkey informed us that it had completed implementation, having destroyed more than 3 million mines.

But the 11MSP also ended with three States Parties still in the process of destroying anti-personnel mines and with all three having missed their destruction deadlines.

This week is an opportunity for all three to inform us of the progress they have made since the 11MSP and what remains to be done.

Also concerning stockpiles, we agreed at the Second Review Conference that States Parties will, when previously unknown stockpiled mines are discovered, report such discoveries and destroy these mines as a matter of urgent priority.

At the 11MSP, three States Parties indicated that they have discovered such stocks. My hope is that later today we will receive updates on their efforts to destroy these mines.

Mine clearance:

With respect to mine clearance, since the 11MSP, two States Parties – Guinea Bissau and Jordan – have announced completion of the implementation of their Article 5 obligations.

I wish to congratulate both States and to commend their respective national demining authorities and implementing partners for their efforts.

Later this year, it is expected that Denmark and Uganda will also report completion, bringing to 23 the number of States Parties that have complied with this onerous obligation.

While States Parties are progressing well in bringing to an end their demining programmes, what we have seen since the 11MSP is two States Parties report for the first time areas that they suspect contain anti-personnel mines.

In both instances, reporting such areas has occurred following the expiry of what would have been each State Party's mine clearance deadline.

Precisely because of such cases, the 11MSP noted that the Convention is silent on how to address situations where States Parties, which never have reported Article 5 obligations, discover previously unknown mined areas.

The 11MSP therefore agreed to the need to develop a rational response to such situations which is firmly anchored in the object and purpose of the Convention and which does not undermine the legal obligations to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas as soon as possible.

In this context, the 11MSP requested that the President, supported by the Coordinating Committee, consult with all relevant stakeholders to prepare a constructive discussion on this matter this week with a view to recommendations on this matter being submitted for consideration at the 12MSP.

I am grateful that the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance have acted pursuant to my request to lead on this matter.

I am confident that the paper that they have distributed will serve as the basis for a constructive discussion tomorrow.

I hope that all interested delegations will engage in this discussion to ensure that we do indeed arrive at the 12MSP with a rational response that we are prepared to adopt.

Victim assistance:

With respect to victim assistance, this ultimately remains why we are here.

If we are to conclusively achieve this Convention's mission, we need to live up to our promise to landmine survivors.

We have adopted an impressive volume of political understandings regarding what assisting the victims means to us.

However, we have not yet addressed what exactly is expected of our Convention and how we will measure our efforts.

For this reason, I am pleased that the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance have scheduled a discussion on Thursday afternoon that aims to tackle the following question:

Given the recognition made by the States Parties that achieving progress in making a tangible difference on the ground for survivors is complicated by the broader set of complex challenges that face most developing countries, what can realistically be expected from the Convention and what is beyond our reach?

This is indeed an important question and I look forward to your views on this matter.

Cooperation and Assistance

Concerning cooperation and assistance, I was pleased that, in the 11MSP's final report, we called on all States Parties to recommit, even in difficult financial times, to realising a world without anti-personnel mines.

And I was equally pleased that the 11MSP took note of and encouraged action on the concrete ideas suggested by the in-coming Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Cooperation and Assistance, as well as by others, to make the best possible use of this new Standing Committee.

This week, the Co-Chairs are seeking your input on some concrete matters concerning facilitating cooperation and assistance.

I encourage all interested delegations to take part in the discussions on a possible platform for partnerships, on trust funds to support implementation and on the availability of assistance and procedures to obtain it.

Mid-term assessment

Finally, dear friends, I wish to echo the words of the President-Designate of the 12MSP.

In his initial ideas regarding the 12MSP, Ambassador Matjaž Kovačič has stated that, in the year leading up to the 12MSP, we find ourselves at the half-way point in the application of the Cartagena Action Plan.

We therefore have the opportunity to conduct a mid-term assessment of our efforts.

If we are going to succeed in seeing that the 12MSP Geneva Progress Report documents the challenges that we have encountered and the work that remains in meeting our Cartagena Action Plan commitments, we will need the States Parties to share essential information this week.

I would encourage delegations to keep this in mind in preparing your updates on mine clearance, victim assistance and stockpile destruction by focusing on main challenges encountered and on your key remaining objectives for 2014.

I wish you all the best for a productive week.