

**ICBL Statement on Transparency**  
**MBT Intersessional Standing Committee Meetings**  
**21 May 2012**



Thank you Mr Chair.

The ICBL commends those States Parties that have submitted their transparency report for year 2011. However we are disturbed that reporting has reached an all-time low this year, with 97 states - or over 60% of all States Parties - that have not yet submitted the report that was due on 30 April. Two of those states are late in submitting their initial reports with Equatorial Guinea being an alarming 13 years late!

It's true that annual Meetings of States Parties and informal meetings such as this one are great opportunities to share information. But the only way to give a full and lasting portrait of your success in implementing the Mine Ban Treaty, and where relevant the landmine situation in your country, is by submitting a transparency report each year. And not to be overlooked is that submission of a report each and every year is a legal obligation that should not be easily ignored.

So the ICBL would like to take this opportunity to ask a simple question to those 97 states, especially those that don't report year after year: why aren't you submitting your report? Is it the length of the reporting format? A simple cover sheet that allows states to fill in only those forms where the situation has changed from the previous year.

Is it because you are not affected and do not believe reporting is therefore needed? Many states that are not affected still have other issues to report on such as retained mines or national implementation measures. And even those that have fulfilled all other treaty obligations still need to report because this too is required by the treaty. Reporting also shows your continued support for the work and aims of the Mine Ban Treaty.

Are there other reasons? This forum is an excellent place to voice those concerns and see if solutions can be found.

Not only is it a question of getting all reports in on time, however, it's also important to get reports of high quality. Many states simply don't fill in applicable forms, skip required boxes, or just limit the information to the strict minimum called for in the forms or the treaty. We would also like to ask you today why this happens. Detailed and precise reporting may take a bit more time, but we strongly believe it is in States Parties' own interest. Reporting allows you to highlight all you have achieved or to explain challenges for which you need support. The more information you provide, the more others will understand your situation. My colleagues at the Landmine Monitor, as well as those drafting annual progress reports, also need such detailed information to give an accurate portrait of states' efforts to rid the world of landmines.

With this in mind, we thank Belgium for working on ways to improve quality of reporting, including by modifying or adding forms. Such changes could be useful, especially to bring the forms in line with the reporting commitments made in the Cartagena Action Plan that are not being widely respected. While it is true that states can already add whatever information they want to the current forms, we believe having an explicit place for such additional information would help encourage states to include it, even if it's indicated that it's on a voluntary basis.

One of the areas most in need of improvement is clearance. Not all states are including the precise information on mined areas or land released as called for in the CAP. Adjusting the forms for this area could help elicit this data.

Another area sorely lacking in detailed information is mines retained for training, particularly on the precise intended purposes and actual uses of such mines.

It would also be useful to have a reporting template for victim assistance and international cooperation. Even if reporting on these issues is not legally required, taking action on them is, and it would therefore be useful to learn what States Parties have achieved.

Changing the reporting forms alone is not enough however. It would also help States Parties to have updated guidelines to reflect the new reporting commitments States Parties have made over the years as well as the understandings they have reached on various aspects of implementation.

Mr. Chair, we'd like to end by once again asking States Parties to use the informality of these meetings to have a real discussion on what can be done to get more reports submitted, and to elevate the quality of the reports to a level worthy of our common effort to create a mine-free world.

Thank you.