



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

Meetings of the Standing Committees 21-25 May 2012

States Parties that have been granted extensions on deadlines for
implementing Article 5

Geneva, 22 May 2012

Co-chairs,

Excellencies,

Dear colleagues,

As this is the first time my delegation takes the floor, let me express our appreciation to the Presidency of the 11 MSP, H.E. Prak Sokhonn, the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committees, the ISU and the GICHD for the organisation and administration of this year's intersessional meeting.

Switzerland would like to share with you some general observations in regard to article 5 obligations and article 5 extensions. Switzerland is aware of the significant challenges States Parties are facing in fulfilling the obligations under article 5 of the Convention.

My delegation appreciates the extensive updates provided by the affected States Parties over the past two days. However, we regret that not all States Parties with extensions were present in the room and made presentations. We see from the presentations that there are countries which have invested a remarkable share of own resources under difficult circumstances and which have made considerable progress in the implementation of article 5.

We also note that in some countries co-ordination has improved, thereby increasing the efficiency of demining efforts to the benefit of the population.

We welcome the efforts undertaken to provide clear data on contamination, on clearance achievements and on remaining challenges in circumstances that are sometimes difficult. We particularly welcome the fact that some States show a high level of national ownership, which is in our view one of the most crucial elements for the implementation of the clearance obligation. We appreciate as well that more and more references to the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) have been made.

However, the overall situation is far from satisfactory. Let me make some remarks in this regard:

Too many States seem to fall behind regarding the implementation of the specific decisions that accompanied the extension of their original deadlines. We share the concerns expressed on various occasions by the ICRC and the ICBL in this regard.

There are also updates with a considerable lack of clarity about the extent of the problem and the reasons for delays. We see a disturbing lack of clarity on both the quantity and quality of the remaining challenge.

Furthermore, it is striking that in some cases, precise information was only provided after the ten year deadline had expired. Concise information on the tasks and responsibilities of the national authorities, including the co-operation and co-ordination with international actors, as well as intermediary quantitative and qualitative benchmarks including timelines for progress are key elements for an update to States Parties.

Some updates seem to be based on insufficient data and incoherent survey results. We would like to take this opportunity to remind States that the Cartagena Action plan calls upon State Parties with Article 5 obligations to adhere to transparency and to clear information on progress and on steps taken aiming at completion.

Co-chairs,

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

We cannot refrain from repeating ourselves: States parties should spare no effort to identify as soon as possible all areas under their jurisdiction or control, in which landmines are suspected or known to be placed. We are still faced with too many States parties for which the extent of the problem is not sufficiently clear.

We would also like to highlight that the presentation of detailed and precise information on progress made, remaining challenges and specific milestones in regard to clearance are crucial, in particular to attract donor interest.

As mentioned by many affected States Parties, it is certainly important to raise new and additional funds. However, measures to increase productivity are equally important. They should be included and displayed in the updates to the States Parties.

The requested deadlines to fulfil the obligations are often too long. Only the minimum of time necessary for completion should be requested. "As soon as possible" remains the goal. We fully support the practice of the last years to decide on intermediary extension requests, providing an extension of up to two years e.g. for the definition of national plans or similar, allowing the re-assessment of the process by our community in relatively short intervals.

Our common goal can only be achieved if and when demining endeavours are put high on the political agenda and are included in overall development and other strategic national plans.

Overall, we are particularly concerned that the list of countries under this segment is becoming longer and longer. In fact, the number of requests is already too high and is increasing rapidly. It is important to stress once again that an extension of the clearance deadline should only be requested in exceptional cases.

Thank you very much.