

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

Geneva, 1 February 2002

International Campaign to Ban Landmines

Closing Remarks by

Susan B. Walker, ICBL Intersessional Programme Officer

Thank you, Ambassador Kongstad,

We have come to the end of a long and full week where, not only have we had meetings in this room, but I would imagine there were not “tens or hundreds”, but more than likely, “thousands” of side and coffee break / lunch meetings which will help advance our mutual goals. Participation in the intersessional Standing Committees was once again broader and more active than previous meetings, with 467 participants from 99 countries and many International Organizations (IOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), as Ambassador Dahinden just noted.

The ICBL and its Working Groups would like to thank all the Standing Committee (SCs) Co-Chairs and Co-Rapporteurs for, once again, working so closely with us in developing agendas which were intended to mark, measure and stimulate progress in the implementation and consolidation of the Mine Ban Treaty. The ambitious work plan set out during these 5 days is a clear indication that this intersessional process is working and that the new international norm is taking hold. Of course, much more could be and remains to be done if we are to meet the deadlines and obligations of the Convention.

Following is a quick checklist of what ICBL believes has been individually and collectively agreed to be undertaken between now and May 2002, with a view to being mid-way to the Review Conference. There was a warm welcome of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and its new Manager, Kerry Brinkert. General satisfaction was expressed with the work of the Coordinating Committee (CC), particularly welcoming the summary reports of the CC meetings being posted on the web in 3 languages. I will mention only some highlights from the other three Standing Committees, but full summaries of those meetings held earlier this week are available outside the conference room.

- SC-Victim Assistance: to launch a consultative process in order to be better able to measure progress in implementing Article 6.3 of the Convention;
- SC-Mine Clearance, Mine Awareness and Related Technologies: Keeping in mind the ten year deadline for mine clearance (Article 5), a process will also be undertaken to further progress on assessing where we stand in terms of the 10 year goal and report back to the May intersessional SC-MC. In other words, attempt to draw a clear picture of global needs in meeting Mine Ban Treaty obligations.
- SC-Stockpile Destruction: Keeping in mind the 4 year deadline (Article 4), with the first deadlines approaching in 13 months time, it was urged that cooperative ways be undertaken to assist targeted countries who appear to be having trouble meeting the

destruction deadline. We once again underline this is not just a Mine Action issue, but one of compliance with the earliest deadline set out by the Mine Ban Treaty.

- Coming to the SC on General Status, it is our understanding that the May intersessionals will include discussion on the following matters, in keeping with the President's Action Programme and discussions during the intersessional SC-GSOC:
- Article 1c: continued sharing of States Parties practices with a view to reaching a common understanding as soon as possible.
- Article 2: States Parties to continue reviewing existing stocks and identifying "best practices"; making a determination of which anti-handling devices may pose a risk to civilians; and coming back to report to the May intersessional SC-GSOC meeting.
- Article 3: urging States Parties to report on intended purpose and actual use of mines retained for training and development purposes.
- Compliance issues: ICBL looks forward to hearing an update from Uganda on their intended expansion of the internal study of these serious compliance concerns and thanks them for expressing their full commitment to the Mine Ban Treaty and its obligations. ICBL is also pleased to note that several States Parties have also sought clarification regarding these matters and trusts this will continue. We also look forward to hearing that States Parties have undertaken to seek clarification on the compliance concerns regarding Tajikistan and any other compliance matters.
- Article 7: States Parties were reminded several times throughout the week of the 30 April deadline for obligatory Article 7 Annual Reports. The VERTIC guide is available to assist States in preparing these reports, as well as offers of assistance by ICRC and several States Parties, including Belgium as the Chair of the Article 7 Contact Group, should this be helpful.
- Article 9: further progress was urged on increasing the number of States Parties with the required national implementing legislation. The ICRC kit on such legislation is available, which includes sample legislation from several States Parties.
- Universalization: We look forward to hearing about the progress made in the ambitious plan set out by the Universalization Contact Group under the leadership of Canada. ICBL would urge the 20 Signatories, which have not yet done so, to ratify by 1 March 2002 – the 3rd anniversary of entry-into-force of the Convention. In order to be a States Party at the 4MSP, it will be necessary for countries to ratify or accede to the Convention by 31 March 2002.

It is certain that many more things could be listed, but it is late in the day. The spirit of cooperation continues and we have much work to do together. The seven Landmine Survivors from Africa have reminded us clearly this week that millions living in mine-affected communities have great expectations from our deliberations. The Survivors have even had their own problems while here in Geneva this week, with two having fallen, three having broken their prostheses and one discovering he has a life-threatening medical condition. They are more fortunate than many, in being able to get assistance in resolving these problems.

These five days, while we have met, there have been more than 250 new mine victims, many in your own countries – let us prove to them that they have not been forgotten.
Thank you.