



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

INTERSESSIONAL PROGRAMME 2003-2004

STANDING COMMITTEE ON STOCKPILE DESTRUCTION

Meeting Report 24 June 2004

I. Introduction

Pursuant to the decisions of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties (5MSP) to the Convention, the meeting of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction was convened by its Co-Chairs, Ambassador Carlo Trezza of Italy and Mr. Carlos Arroyave-Prera of Guatemala, with the support of its Co-Rapporteurs Ms. Rabab Fatima of Bangladesh and Mr. John MacBride of Canada. Also assisting the Co-Chairs was Mr. Luigi Scotto of Italy. The meeting was held in Geneva with the generous support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

As with the Standing Committee Meeting held in February 2004, in accordance with the direction of the 5MSP, the Standing Committee focused its attention on States Parties with deadlines for stockpile destruction before the First Review Conference, and also received updates on the status of stockpile destruction efforts from other States Parties and States not Parties to the Convention.

The Standing Committee also considered two “food for thought” papers prepared by past and current Co-Chairs and Co-Rapporteurs entitled “Post Stockpile Destruction Measures” and “Getting the Job Done”. Additionally the Co-Chairs advised the Standing Committee of their contribution towards preparations for the First Review Conference, with the support of the group of Friends of the President-Designate, in the form of a discussion paper on stockpile destruction to be considered for inclusion in the Draft Review and Action Plan.

II. Overview of stockpile destruction efforts

The Co-Chairs provided an overview of the general status of implementation of Article 4 of the Convention and called upon the Manager of the Implementation Support Unit to introduce an overview document. Mr. Kerry Brinkert informed the Standing Committee that the document showed the status of Article 4 implementation and was based on Article 7 reports and other available sources. He stated that 122 States Parties had either declared not to possess any stocks or based on other available information are not believed to hold stocks. That left only 20 States Parties with stockpiles to destroy.

Mr. Steve Goose of the ICBL presented an overview on progress made in destroying stockpiles. He noted that 62 States Parties had completed their destruction, 48 had declared no stocks, 11 were in the process of completing their destruction and 21 States Parties were required to officially declare their stockpile status. Of the 21, nine are believed to have stocks.

Mr. Goose highlighted in particular Turkmenistan’s case and reported that Turkmenistan which had initially declared 69,200 mines retained under Article 3 had destroyed 60,000 of that number and would destroy its remaining mines by the end of the year. He congratulated Turkmenistan for successfully destroying over 6.6 million mines or more mines than any other State Party except for Italy. He further informed that when Turkmenistan had originally reported a stockpile of 1.2 million mines it had counted cassettes of PFM mines rather than individual mines.

This adjustment changed the total number of mines destroyed by States Parties from 31.7 million to 37.2 million. He stated that a total of 10.4 million mines plus an unknown number held by such states

as Afghanistan, Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo remained to be destroyed by States Parties. Mr. Goose congratulated Suriname, Romania, Tajikistan and Lithuania for completing their destruction well in advance of their deadlines. He informed that, while previously unreported, Sierra Leone had destroyed its stockpile of 959 mines in February 2003 and Mauritius had destroyed the 91 mines it had retained in November 2003.

Mr. Goose expressed concern that five States Parties (Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Liberia, Namibia and St. Lucia) with late Article 7 reports were past their destruction deadlines and that Guinea reported destroying its stocks after its deadline. He noted that Cameroon, which previously reported having no stocks except 500 mines for training, has subsequently destroyed 9,183 AP mines. He further reported that of the 11 States Parties in the process of destruction, Algeria and Bangladesh were yet to start destruction although they had made fair advances in the planning process.

Mr. Goose highlighted the matter of review of mines retained in accordance with Article 3. He welcomed the recent decisions of Lithuania, Mauritius, Suriname, and Zambia to destroy some or all mines initially retained.

With respect to the conversion of AP mines to command detonated munitions he advised that States Parties should report their actions to ensure command detonation in their transparency reports. He expressed concern regarding Lithuania's conversion of OZM 72 mines to that of only command detonation remarking that this was not a desirable practice. He recommended full transparency regarding irreversibility. The issue of a multiplicity of victim-activated fuses that might be available was also raised.

He stated that stockpile destruction goals for the Review Conference should be to eliminate the ambiguity caused by late Article 7 reports and to maximize the number of States Parties fulfilling their stockpile destruction obligations. He said that with sufficient will, the number of States Parties still needing to destroy mines could be as small as 10 by the time of Nairobi.

III. Updates from relevant States Parties on the status of implementation

Updates were provided by States Parties that recently completed stockpile destruction, followed by States Parties in the process of destroying their stocks and the followed by States not parties.

A. States Parties that have recently completed stockpile destruction

- **Tajikistan** reported that its destruction programme was completed on 31 March 2004 with the destruction of its last 200 mines. It will retain 255 mines under Article 3 provisions.
- **Romania** advised that it completed its program in March 2004 destroying 1,075,074 mines. It would retain 2,500 mines for Article 3 purposes, a reduction from the initial number of 4,000. Romania also reported that it had transferred 3,265 mines to the US to a centre for testing and development of detection and demining equipment. Romania also advised that Canada and Norway had provided assistance in 2003.
- **Lithuania** reported that in its voluntary Article 7 report in 2002 it had advised that it would retain its complete stockpile of 8,091 mines under the terms of Article 3. Since becoming a State Party, Lithuania decided to ensure that its stockpile of 3,987 former banned mines would be converted to command detonation mode. All remaining mines were destroyed commencing on 14 April 2004 and concluded in a ceremony on 7 June 2004.
- **Honduras** reported that it had completed its destruction in November 2000 and called on all States Parties to follow the example made by those States Parties that have completed their Article 4 obligations.

- **Suriname** advised that on February 25 2004 it had destroyed 146 of 296 mines in its stockpile. The remaining 150 mines are to be retained under the terms of Article 3.

B. States Parties in the process of destroying stockpiled antipersonnel mines

- **Afghanistan** reported that the MOD estimates that there are 250 major ammunition depots that contain AP mines. Based on the results of the Kabul area pilot project Afghanistan estimates that there are at least 130,000 mines in stocks. Initial contact with NATO Material and Supply Agency (NAMSA) had been made and Afghanistan was now developing a formal request for assistance.
- **Algeria** reported that the stockpile destruction plan was due to be finalized on 7 July 2004 and that destruction was to start on 14 September. The program was expected to be completed on 31 July 2005.
- **Angola** reported an initial stockpile of 59,091 mines of which 8,432 had been destroyed to date leaving a remaining stock of 50,659 mines to be destroyed. Additional stocks, as yet unknown, may be held in bush ammunition dumps necessitating a search and detailed accounting of these dumps. An additional 1,390 AP mines are to be retained under the terms of Article 3. Angolan estimates of the cost of destroying its mines ranges from US\$ 1.47 million to US\$ 2.0 million. Angola informed that the European Commission had agreed to provide 90 percent of these funds with Angola providing 10 percent.
- **Bangladesh** advised the Standing Committee that no concrete progress had been made in the execution of its stockpile destruction plan, which was set to start on 26 May 2004. The launching ceremony was called-off as the UNDP had not made the funds available by the anticipated date, possibly due to internal administrative procedures. As a result, Bangladesh advised that it might have difficulty in meeting its deadline. It informed that funding for its destruction programme has been provided by Canada and expressed the hope that if the funding impasse was resolved destruction will be able to start soon.
- **Belarus** reported that beginning in 2000 it had destroyed more than 200,000 AP mines and was continuing its destruction efforts. It highlighted the fact that the bulk of its mines are PFM 1 mines and that they posed a unique destruction challenge. Belarus is cooperating closely with NAMSA in developing a project to destroy the PFM 1.
- **Burundi** recalled that it had previously reported that it held no stockpiles of AP mines, while retaining 1,200 for training. It noted that it must now take into account the stocks of the former rebels (CNDD), and that it intends to include information on the new numbers to be destroyed and retained in its initial Article 7 report, by December 2004.
- **Colombia** advised the Standing Committee of the status of its destruction program and the results of its search for alternatives to AP mines. It reported that it would destroy 4,900 mines on 16 July 2004, 719 on 31 August and its final 7,789 on 25 October 2004.
- **Democratic Republic of Congo** reported that it had submitted its Article 7 report six days previously but without stating the number of mines in stock. Highlighting the challenges posed by years of conflict, it stated that the DRC was yet to overcome genuine problems resulting from war and secrecy, and said that it would provide the numbers when it can.
- **Greece** reported that it had 1,566,028 AP mines in its stockpile and that they would be destroyed through commercial demilitarization in accordance with NATO Standardization Agreement (STANAG) 4518 at an estimated cost of € 5,000,000. It reported retention of 7,224 mines under Article 3.

- **Guinea Bissau** advised that it was committed to destroy its stockpile of 4,000 AP mines before the Review Conference but required financial assistance. It planned to retain no mines under the terms of Article 3.
- **Mauritania** advised that it will destroy 5,000 mines (previously reported as retained in accordance with Article 3) as soon as possible and thanked Canada for providing funding. Now, only 728 mines are to be retained under the terms of Article 3.
- **Serbia and Montenegro** highlighted the requirement for assistance and invited potential donors to participate. It also highlighted the need for assistance in mine clearance.
- **Tanzania** reported that its destruction program was proceeding well. Of its stock of 23,987 mines, 1,146 will be retained under the terms of Article 3, 19,664 have been destroyed and the remaining 3,177 will be destroyed on 29 July 2004 nine months ahead of schedule. All costs for destruction have been borne by Tanzania. Invitations to the final destruction on 29 July have been issued. Tanzania thanked Belgium for supporting research on mine detection rats.
- **Zambia** notified the Standing Committee that it would destroy 3,345 AP mines (previously reported as retained in accordance with Article 3) beginning on 22 July 2004, leaving 3,346 mines to be retained under the terms of Article 3.

C. States not parties

- **Ukraine:** Mr. Vitaliy Shved of the Ukrainian Mine Action Coordination Centre presented on stockpile destruction activities in Ukraine and the establishment of the Coordination Centre. He reported that with EC financial support and control the first phase of the PFM trials were completed in the summer of 2003. The second phase was expected to be completed in the autumn of this year. This phase was expected to provide a realistic, safe and low cost indication of the technical solution to destroy these mines. He further added that the next steps would be to finish the phase two trials, deciding on the technical solution, tendering, evaluation of the bids, signing contracts, building the necessary facilities and starting destruction in 2005. He concluded by reporting that the Ukrainian Government was waiting for an official guarantee from donors regarding technical and financial support.
- **European Commission:** Ms. Daniela Dicoradio-Andreoni reported that the EC was committed to assisting Ukraine in destroying its entire stockpile. The commitment provided a concrete guarantee and should the current €4 million prove insufficient, the EC was prepared to increase funds available in collaboration with other donors. This support was conditional on Ukraine's prior ratification of the Convention.

IV. Article 7 reporting

The Co-Chairs reported that they had been in contact with UN agencies operating in Liberia who had reported that the Liberian Government stated they do not use mines although the former Government did so. The Government offered to present its initial report as soon as possible. The Co-Chairs informed that as a follow-up they had written to the Liberian Permanent Mission in New York reminding them of destruction deadlines and urging submission of their initial report.

- **Nigeria** reported that it had submitted its initial Article 7 report on 22 June 2004. It held no stock but would retain 3,364 mines under the terms of Article 3.
- **The Organization of American States (OAS)** provided a regional perspective on the issues of transparency and stockpile destruction as these areas of mine action reflected regional cooperation including both technical and financial support delivered through the OAS. It advised that Canada has provided technical and financial resources through the OAS to

destroy 1 million AP mines in Central and South America. All parties have maintained a resource control procedure limiting international support to not more than US\$ 1 per mine despite significant challenges. This process is currently underway in Colombia. It was further stated that it is expected that Guyana will submit its initial Article 7 report prior to the Review Conference. The OAS advised that Uruguay had a remaining stock of approximately 1,400 mines and would retain some under the terms of Article 3.

V. Update on cooperation and assistance

The Co-Chairs introduced a food for thought paper and advised that it formed part of the contribution to the President-Designate of the Review Conference on stockpile destruction for the draft review and action plan. Entitled “Getting the Job Done” this paper was based on obligations contained in Article 6 regarding stockpile destruction. As there was no statement to the contrary, the Co-Chairs concluded that the paper was acceptable to the Standing Committee and that they would recommend it for inclusion in the draft review and action plan.

VI. Matters of a thematic nature related to stockpile destruction

The Co-Chairs reintroduced the food for thought paper entitled “Post Stockpile Destruction Measures” and highlighted the issue of actions following discovery of hitherto unknown stockpiles after completion of the destruction of national stockpiles. For those stocks discovered after the passage of the national deadline, the Co-Chairs recommended the establishment of a best practice of reporting the discovery immediately and destroying the stocks within one year.

- **Canada** intervened to support this recommendation and suggested a further best practice for mines discovered after the national program had ended but before the deadline, of reporting in the Article 7 report and destroying in accordance with a State Party’s deadline.
- **ICBL**: Earlier in the meeting the ICBL highlighted the problem of discovery of new stockpiles and difficulties faced by some States in identifying and locating stockpiles. It said that the best practice in the case of new discoveries should be transparency (immediate reporting) and their timely destruction.

The Co-Chairs concluded that these best practices were acceptable to the Standing Committee and that they would recommend them for inclusion in the draft review and action plan.

VII. Concluding remarks

The Co-Chairs highlighted the importance of meeting Article 4 obligations and the fact that despite other means of disseminating information, Article 7 reports remained the only officially recognized method for States Parties to report their situation regarding stockpile destruction. Reporting, they underlined, had special import from both the disarmament aspect as well as for transparency interest. They stated that stockpile destruction remains a key objective that would need to be pursued in Nairobi and beyond through the Nairobi Action Plan.

They noted that although stockpile destruction was clearly less expensive than mine clearance, there continued to be a requirement to provide both technical and financial support. Other challenges that remained, they stated, were discovery of new stockpiles, control of territory in destruction and destruction of certain special types of mines which would require special attention.