

## Statement by the President-Designate of the 9MSP

### Standing Committee on the General Status and Operations of the Convention

6 June 2008

Colleagues and friends:

It is my pleasure to share with you my initial ideas on the 9MSP as well as to introduce my proposals for the agenda and programme.

My presentation will largely draw from Document #7, which was distributed to you on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, as well as Document #7A, which was distributed to you on Monday.

The 9MSP will need to fulfill one of the same aims as the Sixth through Eighth Meetings – assessing progress made over the past year in the application of the *Nairobi Action Plan*.

The 9MSP therefore should work towards welcoming the *Geneva Progress Report 2007-2008*, which would record progress made in the application of the *Nairobi Action Plan* since the 8MSP.

Accordingly, the “consideration of the general status and operation of the Convention” at the 9MSP would feature thematic discussions and updates along the lines of the main subject headings in the *Nairobi Action Plan*.

As in the past, adequate time would be allocated to each topic in the *Nairobi Action Plan* and discussions would be sequenced in accordance with their sequencing in the *Nairobi Action Plan*.

The 9MSP will differ from all other Meetings of the States Parties, however. At the 9MSP, for the first time, the States Parties will need to consider requests submitted under Article 5 of the Convention. And, at the 9MSP we will need to take decisions on matters concerning preparations for the Second Review Conference.

With respect to the Article 5 extensions process, the 9MSP programme will need to take into account the amount of time needed for the presentation and consideration of requests submitted under Article 5.

What I have proposed is that we hold an informal session immediately after a general exchange of views (a) for requesting States Parties to present their requests, (b) for the 8MSP President to present the analysis of requests, and, (c) for delegations to ask questions.

Following this, the 9MSP could consider other matters related to the operations of the Convention, for example, stockpile destruction and victim assistance, and then, at the end of the week, revert to the question of formal consideration of extension requests.

This would provide time during the course of the week for interested delegations to informally discuss requests presented.

As Prince Mired made clear at the 8MSP, the rules of procedure for the 9MSP do not need to be amended as every MSP's rules have included the possibility that decisions could be taken on Article 5 extension requests.

The rules refer to the procedures contained in the Convention which indicate that, taking into consideration the factors contained in Article 5, paragraph 4, the Meeting shall "assess the request and decide by a majority of votes of States Parties present and voting whether to grant the request for an extension period."

The rules of procedure go on to outline the method of voting.

With respect to the Second Review Conference, the 9MPS will need to agree to a preparatory process for the Second Review Conference.

I have proposed that the precedent set by the First Review Conference would be useful to follow.

- Two preparatory meetings – one being half a day in length in May 2009 and the other two days in length in September 2009 – should be sufficient and cost effective.
- By being practical minded, the first preparatory meeting could take place immediately after meetings of the Standing Committees in May 2009. This would enable participation by sponsored delegates.
- If necessary, as was the case in the lead-up to the First Review Conference, the President-Designate of the Second Review

Conference could convene additional informal meetings if deemed necessary.

You will have seen in Document 7A that I have proposed specific dates for meetings in 2009.

Some of the considerations behind these proposed dates include (a) that the meetings of the Standing Committees should take place approximately at the mid-way point between the 9MSP and the Second Review Conference; (b) that we should avoid conflicts with other major meetings, particularly those on the disarmament calendar; and, (c) that meeting space is available.

In particular, I am proposing:

- that meetings of the Standing Committees take place from Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup> to mid-day on Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>;
- that the First Preparatory Meeting take place the afternoon of Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>;
- that the Second Preparatory Meeting take place on September 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>; and,
- that, in keeping with the decisions of the First Review Conference and the provisions of Article 12 of the Convention, the Second Review Conference take place from November 30<sup>th</sup> to December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

Again, with effective time management, possibly by using sessions that are longer than traditional three-hour time blocks, it should be possible to fit the work of the Standing Committees into a 4.5 day period in May followed by a half-day preparatory meeting.

The 9MSP will also need to designate a President for the Second Review Conference and decide on the location of the Second Review Conference.

As you are well aware, two States Parties have formally indicated their interest in hosting the Second Review Conference.

The two countries are Cambodia and Colombia. I would like to thank the delegations of these two countries for their generous offers which are a clear sign of the vitality of our Convention.

It is clear that it is in the interest of the Convention that we work out, as soon as possible and well in advance of the 9<sup>th</sup> MSP a resolution to the dilemma that two State Parties want what only one can have.

To this end, we visited the two countries and the two proposed facilities and had extensive discussions with the competent authorities. I came to the conclusion that both candidatures are excellent. Therefore we should base our choice only on one criteria that is "which location is best in a position to serve the goals of the Convention, and in particular also its universalisation".

In the past four days, I have been extensively consulting with delegations and I will continue to do so. Most delegations told me that they don't want to vote on this question. I fully agree with this and I will therefore bring forward, in due time and in agreement with the delegations of Colombia and Cambodia, a proposal which includes the venue of the second review Conference and eventually also the name of the candidate for Presidency. I hope that you agree with this procedure.

Finally, I wish to announce that I will convene an informal meeting on Wednesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> in order to seek the views on proposed matters of substance to be considered by the 9MSP.

Thank you.