

Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention

Closing remarks by the Co-Chairs (Kenya and Germany)

6 June 2008

To close this meeting, Kenya and Germany would like to share some observations:

- First: We are pleased to see that ten years after its signature, the Convention is very much alive, with now 156 States parties. And the discussions this week show that it might even get livelier !. More importantly - the Convention generally seems to be in „good health“. We all need to strive that it stays that way in the future by fully implementing its provisions.
- Second: We welcome that further steps are being taken towards universal acceptance of the Convention and commend all those contributing to these ongoing universalization efforts, States Parties, the UN, the EU, the OAS, the African Union, the ICBL, the ICRC, and others.
- Third: We are pleased with the amount of energy and attention being directed towards resource mobilization and utilization, both through the Resource Utilization Contact Group and the Linking Mine Action and Development Contact Group. But we also note that a variety of further actions are necessary to both mobilize funds and to use these funds in an efficient and effective manner.
- Fourth: We are pleased with the will of States Parties to volunteer information on implementation beyond what is minimally required under Article 7. But the many delays in Art.7-reporting also gives rise to some worries.
We are particularly thankful to those delegations who provided additional information on mines retained under Article 3 of the Convention, in accordance with Nairobi Action Plan #54, either through their Art.7 report or their presentations this week.
- Fifth: While it was noted that even 10 years after signature of the Convention we have a long way to go towards full implementation of Article 9, we saw at this meeting that some progress is being made. We particularly thank those delegations which prepared updates on this matter in response to our letter.
- Sixth: We are pleased that our Convention's implementation machinery and in particular the ISU, is working well. Moreover, we are pleased with the high quality and intensity of substantive and organizational preparations for the 9MSP.
- Finally (and stepping a little outside the confines of the particular items dealt with under this Standing Committee): This meeting has also underlined that major challenges to implementation remain and highlighted the important and difficult issues we will have to deal with and have to decide upon at the 9MSP.
This concerns for example several cases, where States parties were not able to meet their deadlines for stockpile destruction under Art. 4.
And it concerns in particular the decisions that the 9MSP will have to take regarding the large number of requests for an extension of the mine clearance deadlines under Art. 5 of the Convention. It seems to us that it is the responsibility of every State Party to come to the 9MSP well prepared to allow the 9MSP to take an *informed* decision about these requests. Our guideline there should be both the credibility of the Convention's central provisions and the cooperative spirit of the Convention.

- Before closing, please allow me to thank our Co-Rapporteurs – Camillo of Chile and Masahiro Japan for their support of our work
- Let me thank as well the interpretation team for providing the very basis for mutual understanding of each other's situation and positions during this busy week, and those that provided financial resources through the ISU trust fund for these services.

With that said, I wish to declare this meeting of the Standing Committees closed but I would appeal to you to stay in your seats for the closing remarks of the Director of the GICHD.