

Overview of the general status of implementation

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Convention**

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It has been our practice that the Convention's President sets the scene for the meetings of the Standing Committees by providing an overview of the general status and operation of the Convention. It is my pleasure to do so at this meeting.

Universalization:

With respect to universalization, at the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties it was a great pleasure to welcome Iraq and Kuwait to the Convention and to receive in person the instrument of accession from the Minister of State of the Republic of Palau. At the close of the 8MSP, the Convention had entered into force for 153 States. As the Convention has since entered into force for Iraq, Kuwait and Palau, there are now 156 States Parties.

However, the *Dead Sea Progress Report* implores us to not stop at 156. In the *Dead Sea Progress Report*, we recorded as priorities:

- that “all States Parties should direct specific efforts towards encouraging quick progress by those States not parties which have indicated that they could ratify or accede to the Convention in the near-term”,
- that “all States Parties and those that share their aims should continue to increase universalization efforts that place a priority on those States not parties that produce, use, transfer and maintain large stockpiles of anti-personnel mines, including those developing new kinds of anti-personnel mines”, and,
- that “States Parties should make renewed efforts to use bilateral, regional and multilateral meetings and events to promote the Convention including in the United Nations General Assembly and its committees.”

When I closed the 8MSP, I promised that I would do my best to meet the high standards and success of previous presidents, such as my predecessor Caroline Millar of Australia who placed a high priority on universalization.

In this regard, I am pleased to report that I have recently visited Singapore and the Republic of Korea where I delivered the message that the world would be a better place if they joined our common effort.

In addition, I am committed to further engagement, particularly in my own region as well as in Europe where it remains an oddity that two members of the European Union would remain outside of the family of States Parties.

Stockpile destruction:

With respect to stockpile destruction, we often speak of this aspect of the Convention as being one of the Convention's success stories. Indeed, it is impressive that as many as 149 States Parties now no longer hold stocks of anti-personnel mines and that approximately 40 million stockpiled mines have been destroyed.

It is a profound concern, however, that three States Parties earlier this year missed their non-extendable deadlines for destroying their stocks. I have written to these three to encourage greater transparency and to proceed with destruction as soon as possible. In addition, I have offered to visit these three States Parties to view their destruction programmes in person.

I commend the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction for their enthusiastic pursuit of ways to prevent further instances of non-compliance and I look forward to discussions on this matter during their meeting later today.

Destroying emplaced mines:

With respect to our obligations under Article 5 to destroy emplaced anti-personnel mines, we have grown used to reporting on what we have called "mine clearance". We now know better.

More than a decade of efforts to implement Article 5 of the Convention has demonstrated complex challenges associated with identifying the exact locations of mined areas. For many States Parties reporting mined areas under their jurisdiction or control, imprecise identification and significant overestimation of the size of mined areas has led to inappropriate allocations of time and resources.

The vast majority of areas being cleared simply do not contain any mines. We must therefore proceed in a more efficient and expedient manner to fulfill our Article 5 obligations through the application of the full range of methods to release mined areas as defined by the Convention.

This point has been highlighted through the requests for extensions on the fulfillment of Article 5 obligations that have now been submitted by 13 States Parties. I look forward on Wednesday and Thursday to the updates provided by these and the other States Parties that are in the process of fulfilling Article 5 obligations.

For my part, on Wednesday I will report in detail on the effort I have led, pursuant to the decisions of the 7MSP, of analyzing the requests submitted.

Victim assistance:

With respect to victim assistance, incredible strides have been taken by many of the 25 States Parties that have reported the responsibility for significant numbers of survivors. That is, we used to talk about 24 such States Parties but now Jordan has made it clear that it too has a responsibility for significant numbers of survivors.

As the President of the Hashemite Charitable Society for Soldiers with Special Needs and Vice President of Jordan's Higher Council for Persons with Disabilities, I am personally

seized of the imperative to meet the needs and guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities, including landmine survivors.

I hope that as President I can contribute to encouraging greater national ownership by all relevant States Parties. This will be essential in order that we, the States Parties that have reported that we are ultimately responsible for significant numbers of survivors, can demonstrate real progress by the time of the Second Review Conference.

Other matters essential for achieving the Convention's aims:

In terms of other matters essential for achieving the Convention's aims, I would note that cooperation and assistance remains the heart and soul of our Convention. But just as with the human body, a heart and a soul will not function on their own. Rather, their proper functioning is a result of our conscious actions.

As mine-affected States Parties that need assistance, we can do more to motivate others to assist us by demonstrating ownership, that is, by establishing the proper national structures, by putting in place detailed and measurable plans to achieve completion, and, by making a significant national investment into humanitarian demining.

Those in a position to provide assistance, then, must not forget that when they signed up to the Convention there was no 10 year limit to the application of Article 6. As noted in Article 19, "the Articles of this Convention shall not be subject to reservations" and so let us not place artificial limits on our willingness to assist one another, particularly in cases where national ownership has been demonstrated.

Concerning transparency and the effective exchange of information, there are now only four States Parties that have not yet submitted an initial report on time. However, our commitment to be transparent goes beyond what is minimally required of us in Article 7. For instance, we have made commitments in the *Nairobi Action Plan*:

- to provide information on matters not specifically required but which may assist in the implementation process and in resource mobilization, such as information on mine victim assistance efforts and needs;
- to provide information on the plans requiring the retention of mines for the development of and training in mine detection, mine clearance, or mine destruction techniques and to report on the actual use of retained mines and the results of such use; and,
- to exchange views and share their experiences in a cooperative and informal manner on the practical implementation of the various provisions of the Convention.

I look forward to such transparency during the course of this week's meetings.

With respect to preventing and suppressing prohibited activities, and, facilitating compliance, the *Nairobi Action Plan* underscored that primary responsibility for ensuring compliance rests with each State Party through Article 9 obligations. Again, this is an area where Jordan wishes to lead by example, having adopted since the 8MSP legislation to prevent and suppress prohibited acts. I hope others will report on Friday during the meeting of this Standing Committee that similar actions have been taken.

Also with respect to compliance, I wish to report that, as my predecessor has done, I have noted with concern reports of the UN Monitoring Group's report on Somalia which alleged transfers of landmines into Somalia by three States Parties to the Convention and one State not party. In my capacity as President, I have written to the Chair of the Monitoring Group to seek further information, particularly as some of the terminology in the report was unclear as to which types of mines were allegedly transferred.

Finally, concerning implementation support, we continue to be well-served by the mechanisms that exist pursuant to the decisions of the States Parties or that have emerged informally. The machinery of the Convention is efficient and inexpensive, but requires resources none the less. Thus, I look forward to announcements on Friday concerning commitments we made in Nairobi to continue to provide on a voluntary basis the necessary financial resources for the operation of the ISU and to contribute to the Sponsorship Programme thereby permitting widespread representation at meetings of the Convention.

Thank you.