

Mine Ban Convention

Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction, 2 June 2008

Statement by Norway on “Addressing concerns about compliance with Article 4 of the Convention”

Thank you, Madam Co-Chair,

The implementation of Article 4 on Stockpile Destruction has been one of the significant measures of the success of the Mine Ban Convention. An impressive and amazing number of stockpiled antipersonnel mines has been destroyed over the last 10 years, as we heard earlier today. Tens of millions of mines will no longer be a danger to human beings.

The task of destroying stockpiles is in some cases considerable, but not enormous. Some types, like PFM-1, are more difficult than others, but not impossible. We welcome the work that the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction have done this year to address this specific issue, in cooperation with states in possession of stockpiles of PFM-1 and with donors. We thank you for the very useful summary of your informal closed consultations, and we are convinced that this kind of effort will contribute in no small manner both to prevent further cases on non-compliance and to solve current situations.

Article 4 of the Mine Ban Convention has a clear deadline for destruction and does not contain any extension clause such as Article 5 on mine clearance. When the treaty text was drafted and adopted more than 10 years ago, no-one believed that any state party would need more than four years to destroy their stockpiles. It is still our understanding that if the necessary political will is present, and appropriate resources allocated, such a deadline is realistic and achievable.

The fact that some States Parties have not been able to meet their deadlines is a very serious matter, as referred to by the Co-Chairs. The provisions in Article 4 are an integral part of the Convention, and the failure of some states to comply with these obligations represents a challenge to all States Parties. When such situations occur, it is extremely important that they are dealt with in an orderly manner. Transparency and specific plans on how the matter will be solved will be essential. Article 7 is relevant in this context. If questions related to compliance with Article 4 are handled in an orderly and acceptable way, Article 8 of the convention may not be applied.

We therefore welcome the thought and the effort that the current Co-Chairs of this Committee have put into this issue, and we welcome the paper on Ensuring the full implementation of Article 4, contained in Document 2B. We are in full agreement that we should do all we can to prevent situations of non-compliance in the future. Early and active engagement of States Parties with Article 4 obligations, as recommended by the Co-Chairs in their paper, would possibly be the most important and effective method to prevent countries from delaying implementation of Article 4 and risking bypassing their deadline and thus being non-compliant with the treaty. I would also like to remind everybody that the obligation of Article 4 is actually to destroy all stockpiles as soon as possible, and, as the ICBL mentioned earlier, there is no reason to wait.

Finally, again, I would like to commend and thank the Co-Chairs for their efforts, and to express our support for the recommendations in your paper.

Thank you, Madam/Mr Co-Chair.