

## Notes for ICRC intervention

### Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction Monday 21 June 2010

Thank you Mr. Co-Chair,

The destruction of AP mine stockpiles is one of the absolute obligations of the Mine Ban Convention and is central to the achievement of its objective of forever ending the scourge these weapons have caused among civilian populations worldwide. Destruction is the ultimate means of ensuring that these weapons will never be used which in turn is the basis for the Convention's stipulation that they must be destroyed within four years, with no possibility of an extension. It must then be a concern of all States Parties when stockpile destruction deadlines cannot be met, whatever the specific reasons may be.

Based on the presentations made here today, the ICRC is deeply concerned that the **Ukraine** has declared that it has been unable to comply with its Article 4 obligation to destroy its stockpile of 6 million anti-personnel mines. We thank the Ukraine for having transparently shared with States Parties today some ideas of its plan to destroy its stocks in furtherance of action point 9 of the Cartagena Action Plan. However, we urge the Ukraine and relevant actors to explore the ways the destruction process could proceed more rapidly up through the funds available to it under the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument. It is of the utmost importance for the credibility of the Convention that all possible avenues are employed by the Ukraine in order to be able to complete the destruction of stocks in a much shorter time frame than the 6 years currently being proposed.

We would like to thank **Turkey, Greece and Belarus** for having provided an update on their efforts to rectify their state of non-compliance with their deadline under article 4 and on the status of their plans to destroy their remaining stocks of anti-personnel mines.

In this regard, we welcome **Turkey's** report that it has completed the destruction of more than 90 % of its stockpiles to date. As to the small stock of ADAM mines possessed by Turkey, which contain depleted uranium and cannot be destroyed at the Turkish Munitions Disposal Facility, we hope that it will very soon be in a position to announce the precise plans envisaged for the destruction. It is important to the Convention as a whole that by the 10th meeting of States Parties Turkey will be in the position to announce that it indeed completed its obligations under Article 4.

With regard to **Greece**, we are concerned about the very limited progress made in the destruction of its mines in the last six months. We understand that unforeseen events took place at the Bulgarian factory, which was processing the destruction of a significant part of the Greek stock of anti-personnel mines. However, more than 2 years after the expiry of its destruction deadline, we understand that 60 % of the Greek stockpiles remain to be destroyed.

This being said, the ICRC very much welcomes the announcement by Greece today that they have plans in place to destroy this remaining stockpile in a short period of time. It is indeed very good news that the company about to be chosen by Greece will have 6 months to finish the destruction of the remaining stockpile. Greece should do its utmost to avoid any further delay in the destruction of its stockpiles and should communicate to the Presidency of the Convention and to the co-chairs on very regular basis the precise plans for the completion of its obligations and whether they are on track to complete by the 10<sup>th</sup> MSP.

We also welcome the announcement that the 40 % of mines transferred to the factory in Bulgaria for destruction have now been destroyed in full.

Finally, we welcome the very detailed and transparent information shared today with us by **Belarus**. However, the ICRC is extremely concerned by the news that the second tendering process has been cancelled. From the information communicated today by our distinguished colleague from Belarus, we understand that the European Commission has expressed its willingness to re-launch another tendering process soon and possibly make some of the conditions less restrictive in order to be able to find a compliant company. We would very much like to hear from the European Commission about the plans that they have in place to face this extraordinary situation.

This subject needs high level political attention on all sides, including members of the European Union, to ensure that the stalemate on this matter, which we witnessed in the past two years, is resolved as a matter of great urgency.

Actions points 7, 8 and 9 of the Cartagena Action Plan highlight the importance of this subject for all States Parties and should be implemented as a high priority by those States Parties that have missed their non-extendable deadlines for stockpile destruction.