

**Non-Paper on the Intersessional Work Programme of the
Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of
Antipersonnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

Purpose of this paper:

Three years have passed since the Intersessional Work Programme was established and a great deal has been accomplished. With only two years before the Conference to review the operation and status of the Convention, much remains to be done.

At this time, therefore, States Parties and key partners may wish to reflect upon how the Intersessional Work Programme has contributed to the effective implementation of the Convention and how, the programme could contribute from this point forward. This paper is intended to support such a reflection by reviewing the nature of our efforts to date and some of the lessons learned, and by suggesting certain key principles for future work, consistent with the original and still valid objectives agreed to by State Parties three years ago.

Background:

In 1999, the First Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention in Maputo established the Intersessional Work Programme to ensure the systematic, effective implementation of the Convention through a more regularized programme of work based on a President's Paper, which noted that the programme's objectives were:

- To “engage a broad international community for the purpose of advancing the achievement of the humanitarian objectives of the Convention”;
- To “facilitate in-depth considerations of mine action issues by all interested parties at meetings which complement and build upon each other in a structured and systematic way”; and,
- “To organize the work within the framework of the Convention in a way which promotes continuity, openness, transparency, inclusiveness and a cooperative spirit.”

The Intersessional Work Programme has been successful in raising awareness, reaching common understanding on diverse issues, identifying best practices, sharing experiences and information on broad means available to address the landmine problem, as well as providing the opportunity for different actors involved in mine action issues to meet and discuss ideas.

Closely related to the accomplishments of the intersessional programme has been the establishment by the States Parties of both the Coordinating Committee of Co-Chairs and Co-Rapporteurs of the Standing Committees and the Implementation Support Unit within the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

Lessons Learned Regarding the Intersessional Process:

The experience of the Intersessional Work Programme has illustrated the importance of a number of principles that have or can contribute to an effective work programme. Reflecting on these principles may lead to ways to ensure the programme's ongoing effectiveness:

- Coherence is important in terms of how individual Standing Committees are part of a greater whole, requiring that they work together in identifying needs, developing agendas, and focusing on the humanitarian objectives while recognizing the distinct nature of the issues of each Committee.

- Flexibility has proven valuable in the ability of the intersessional programme to evolve to meet changing needs;
- Partnership with respect to the essential contribution of international and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the Convention, has been key in the success of this process;
- Informality has ensured openness and a richness of dialogue;
- Continuity ensures that efforts build upon the progress of the past and point to how challenges can be overcome in the future; and,
- Effective preparation contributes to the maximum benefit of all attending the meetings.

Current needs and opportunities:

The purpose of the Intersessional Work Programme is as relevant today as it was in 1999. At this stage in the life of the Convention and given the achievements to date, within the aim of effective implementation of all provisions of the Convention, it is important to focus with greater clarity on those areas most directly related to the core humanitarian objectives of the Convention:

- to end the terror caused by anti-personnel mines by clearing mined areas;
- to provide assistance to landmine survivors;
- to destroy anti-personnel mines that remain in stockpiles;
- to ensure universal acceptance of the ban on anti-personnel mines;

More effective focus on the Convention's humanitarian aims by the Intersessional Work Programme requires the full and active participation of States Parties. Notwithstanding the Convention's unique spirit of partnership involving non-governmental and international organizations, the responsibility of implementing the Convention rests with States Parties. Therefore, a greater emphasis should be placed on hearing from States Parties with respect to their plans and needs for assistance and from States Parties in a position to provide assistance with respect to their intentions and requirements for information.

A renewed emphasis on the implementation of the Convention's humanitarian core objectives should include an ongoing overall assessment of the Convention's implementation and operation. By 2004, progress in some areas will be essential (e.g., the completion of stockpile destruction by many State Parties and significant advances made in clearing mined land). In other areas progress will be expected (e.g., improvement in the well being of landmine survivors and advances towards the universalization of the Convention). The intersessional programme can contribute significantly in this regard by providing a forum where existing needs, means available to meet those needs, progress being made, and remaining work are identified.

Conclusion:

The Intersessional Work Programme has been a valuable tool in the success of the Convention and the lessons learned should continue to guide our efforts. We may also derive ongoing benefit from the intersessional programme by more effectively focusing our attention on the humanitarian aims of the Convention and progress in our collective effort to implement provisions of the Convention most directly related to these aims by increasing the participation of States Parties, strengthening dialogue among relevant actors, assessing progress, identifying needs and the means to answer those needs, and promoting the universalization of the Convention.