

## **VERTIC statement**

### **Promoting facilitation and clarification of compliance with the Ottawa Convention**

#### **Intersessional Standing Committee Meeting on the General Status and Operation of the Convention**

**Friday, 31 May 2002**

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Thank you co-Chair.

VERTIC welcomes this opportunity to contribute to states parties' continuing discussions on the treaty provisions for facilitating and clarifying compliance.

VERTIC believes that these mechanisms will serve to further build confidence between treaty parties that the commitments that they have undertaken to abide by are being complied with and that the treaty as a whole is being implemented fairly and effectively. We therefore believe it is important to determine the practicalities for using these mechanisms as soon as possible.

VERTIC recently began a new project to assist states in implementing the Ottawa Convention. We have received funding for this project from the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund.

Through this project, VERTIC aims to further raise awareness of the importance of having the Article 8 mechanisms ready for use and to contribute to the debate on how this may be best achieved. The major element of the project will be the production of a guide providing practical suggestions on how states may wish to prepare for receiving a fact-finding mission

under the treaty. VERTIC intends to have the guide completed in time for the Fourth Meeting of States Parties in September this year.

Fact-finding missions are, of course, but one of the treaty procedures available for clarifying compliance. Initiating a request for clarification, or using the good offices of the UN Secretary-General, may lead to a satisfactory resolution of any compliance question. VERTIC understands that states may also wish to conduct bilateral discussions encouraging demonstration of compliance in certain cases. It is to be hoped that compliance with the treaty will be transparently clarified through these other mechanisms so that a fact-finding mission will be rarely, if ever, used.

Nonetheless, as a legitimate treaty procedure, and one which will take some advance planning in order to be conducted efficiently, it is essential that states prepare as early as possible for the possibility of receiving a mission.

Such preparations will themselves have a confidence-building effect. By preparing for receiving a fact-finding mission states may further demonstrate their willingness to comply with all aspects of the treaty—whether or not they're ever likely to be asked to receive a mission.

These preparations need not be onerous. In fact, many states will be able to draw on their experience in implementing verification arrangements for other arms control or disarmament treaties. Those states with less experience in these matters may find the guide particularly useful in stimulating discussions among the relevant government agencies on the implementation of appropriate procedures.

By demonstrating their willingness to be involved in this process, states can also demonstrate the seriousness with which they view full implementation of the treaty.

It is important that states parties also continue to develop their collective mechanisms for rapid deployment of a fact-finding mission should a mission be mandated, such as the compiling of lists of relevant experts by the UN Secretary-General and the determination of proper procedures for fact-finding missions.

VERTIC's project will build on the efforts already being made by the UN, states parties collectively, individual states and other interested NGOs to prepare for full implementation of Article 8.

VERTIC will also be consulting as widely as possible in drafting our Article 8 guide and welcomes comments from states parties, international and non-governmental organisations at any stage of our project. We are aware that one state party has elaborated procedures and held practice inspections for receiving a fact-finding mission under Article 8, while some others have made provision for inspection modalities in their national legislation. We would be very interested to learn if any other state party has considered the necessary procedures for receiving a fact-finding mission.

I therefore welcome your comments on, and contributions to, this guide both during this meeting and afterwards through the VERTIC office. I look forward to working with you on this project.

Thank you, co-chair, for allowing me the opportunity to make these remarks on this important treaty article.