

PRESIDENT'S ACTION PROGRAMME

Annex VI to the Final Report of the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties

Geneva

20 September 2002

Introduction

Together we have achieved a great deal in implementing the Convention and promoting its universal acceptance since its entry into force on 1 March 1999. However, between now and the Convention's first Review Conference in 2004 additional efforts will be required to ensure that the Convention lives up to its humanitarian promise. With this in mind, the President of the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties urges all States Parties and relevant organizations to remain as committed during the next intersessional period as they have been in the past. To focus our collective efforts in this period leading to the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties, the President has identified the following objectives and actions for consideration.

Focusing on our core humanitarian objectives

A. Clearing mined land:

Thirty-one States Parties have reported mined areas. At least a further 11, of those States Parties that have not yet submitted Article 7 reports, suffer from the impact of landmines. Clearing mined areas within 10 years after entry into force of the Convention will be a significant challenge for many of these States. We must work quickly to ensure that we know the extent of the problem, establish and support national mine action programs, develop national plans which take into account the Convention's 10-year time-frame, identify technical and financial needs and ensure that progress is effectively measured. By acting promptly we can ensure that this 10-year period will be well used, and that very few States Parties, if any, will need to request an extension on their period of obligation as prescribed in Article 5.

B. Destroying stockpiled mines

While the destruction of anti-personnel mines is one of the Convention's major success stories, we must recall that the Convention's first stockpile destruction deadlines are only months away. The deadline for having completed the destruction of stockpiled mines in accordance with Article 4 is 1 March 2003 for the first 45 States Parties for which the Convention entered into force. An additional 24 States Parties will be required to have completed destruction by the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties. Of these 69 States Parties, 19 are still in the process of destroying stockpiled mines or have yet to begin doing so. While mine clearance and victim assistance require our utmost attention, in

the interest of the health of the Convention we must also place a high priority on meeting our deadlines for stockpile destruction.

C. Assisting victims

Forty-three States Parties may require assistance to meet the care, rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration needs of landmine survivors. The challenge of meeting these needs is compounded by the fact that countries with the greatest numbers of mine victims are also amongst the world's poorest. And the commitment to assist landmine survivors is not expressed in a time limit in the Convention, but in the lifetime of the victims. We have gained an understanding of the challenges faced by survivors. We must continue to take steps to assist them in overcoming these challenges

D. Universalizing the Convention

With two-thirds of the world's States having already joined the Convention, dramatic strides have been taken towards consolidating the international norm being established by the Convention. Among the States remaining outside of the Convention, those States that have recently used antipersonnel mines and/or continue to produce them cause particular concern.

Further efforts need to be made to bring the major possessors of anti-personnel mines into the Convention. We need therefore to increase our efforts, individually and collectively, to stress our conviction that no conceivable utility of anti-personnel mines could possibly outweigh and justify the devastating humanitarian costs of these weapons.

Taking action to achieve our objectives

A. Exchanging information

Exchanging information through the Intersessional Work Programme and Article 7 reporting has proven to be essential to our collective efforts to implement the Convention. During the 2002-2003 intersessional period, a priority should be placed on providing mine affected States Parties with sufficient opportunities to share information on their plans and needs for assistance and providing States Parties and others in a position to do so with sufficient opportunities to share their plans for assistance. An emphasis should be placed on identifying the needs of those States Parties whose deadlines for stockpile destruction fall between now and the Review Conference. All

parties, including the Co-Chairs and the President, should work directly with these States Parties to encourage them to develop plans for, and measure progress in, the destruction of stockpiles.

As Article 7 reporting provides valuable information to both support co-operation and assess progress, States Parties must give due regard to the annual reporting deadlines contained in Article 7. States Parties, individually or collectively, the Article 7 Contact Group, the President and interested organisations should continue to promote implementation of these provisions and provide means to assist States Parties in complying with them. An emphasis should be placed on those States Parties, which have not yet submitted their initial Article 7 reports and those, which are late in submitting their annual reports. In addition, mine affected States Parties should consider maximizing the potential of Article 7 reporting by using it, on a voluntary basis, as a tool to communicate to other States Parties their plans, challenges and needs regarding mine clearance, victim assistance and stockpile destruction.

States Parties are encouraged to consider using “Form J” to indicate specific expertise and technical advice that they are willing to share with other countries. All States Parties should also take full advantage of the mechanisms and tools that have been developed to assist in completing Article 7 reports. States Parties make considerable efforts to exchange information through the Intersessional Work Program and Article 7 reporting. They should ensure that the information made available is used effectively.

B. Mobilising resources

In Article 6, States Parties in a position to do so committed themselves on a long-term basis to sustain the process of achieving the Convention’s humanitarian aims. States Parties can live up to this obligation by continuing to give high priority to mine action within their development and humanitarian policies, particularly with a view to the Convention’s 10-year time frame for mine clearance. In this regard, States Parties should provide assistance and cooperation primarily to those that have accepted the Convention. Such a clear message will make a valuable contribution to universalization.

Our efforts to date have continuously made advances in the quality and cost effectiveness of mine action programs. We need to ensure that we sustain these efforts to truly achieve our aims. In this regard, all relevant actors should take the necessary steps now and maintain frequent contact to ensure that by the Review Conference a significant renewal of our collective commitment is made to finish the job of eliminating anti-personnel mines.

C. Regional approaches

With certain regions or sub-regions deserving greater attention, all actors should be encouraged to undertake regional initiatives related to implementation, with the outcomes reported at the

Standing Committees. In addition, States Parties should place a priority on the achievement of the Convention’s aims within regional forums of which they are members.

D. Actions to promote the universal acceptance of the Convention

Given the importance of universalization in achieving the humanitarian aims of the Convention, States Parties, individually and collectively, the Universalization Contact Group, the President and interested organizations should play an active role in promoting the Convention. We should strive to achieve maximum acceptance of the Convention and of the international norm established by it in time for the Review Conference.

States Parties and others should use every opportunity at all levels of contacts, bilateral and multilateral, political and military, with States not Parties to urge them to ratify or accede to the Convention. Special emphasis should be placed on those States outside of the Convention that use and/or produce or possess large stockpiles of anti-personnel mines.

E. The role of public conscience

The efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and numerous other non-governmental organizations around the world in calling for a ban of anti-personnel mines is evidence of the important role of public conscience in furthering the principles of humanity. The role of public conscience will remain important in maintaining domestic interest in the landmines issue. Doing so will be essential to sustain the necessary political will and to generate financial and non-material resources to finish the work that remains. States Parties should continue to reinforce their strong partnership with the ICBL and ICRC, as well as with other significant actors in our common cause, like the United Nations and relevant regional organizations.

F. Cooperation to promote further clarity

The contributions of States Parties in informal discussions on matters pertaining to Articles 1, 2, 3, 8 and 9 of the Convention have improved clarity and understanding with respect to application of these Articles by States Parties. States Parties should continue to share information in the same informal, cooperative and voluntary with a view towards obtaining further clarity and understanding regarding the application of these Articles.

Note : The 16-20 September 2002 Fourth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction warmly welcomed the President’s Action Programme “as a practical means of facilitating implementation of the Convention in accordance with the recommendations made by the Standing Committees.”