



**Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer
of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

INTERSESSIONAL PROGRAMME 2002-2003

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON MINE CLEARANCE, MINE RISK EDUCATION
AND MINE ACTION TECHNOLOGIES**

Report of the 14 May 2003 Meeting

I. Introduction

Pursuant to the decisions of the Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention (4MSP), the meeting of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies was convened by its Co-Chairs, Ambassador Jean Lint of Belgium and Mr. Michael Oyugi of Kenya, with support of their Co-Rapporteurs, Ambassador Sam Sotha of Cambodia and Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi of Japan. The meeting was held in Geneva with the support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

The meeting intended: to provide an update on the status of the implementation of elements of the Convention relevant to this Standing Committee; to provide an opportunity for mine affected States Parties to present their specific situations and needs with regard to mine action, following the “4P approach” where possible, addressing Problems, Plans, Progress and Priorities for assistance; to highlight co-operation and assistance between mine affected States Parties; to provide an opportunity for updates on assistance and cooperation; and, to survey progress made and to present problems and recommendations regarding mine action technologies.

II. Overview of the Status of Implementation

The Co-Chairs highlighted that, to date, a total of 37 States Parties have reported mined areas, and an additional 8 who have not yet provided Article 7 Reports are likely to be mine affected. Of these 45 States Parties, 25 have a deadline to clear mined areas by 2009. It was reminded that, at the last Standing Committee, Costa Rica declared that it had completed implementation of Article 5 of the Convention, and that Honduras planned to become mine free in 2003, with Guatemala following in 2004 and Nicaragua in 2006. As had been indicated in the report of the previous meeting of the Standing Committee, the Co-Chairs provided a detailed summary of the important information shared by the mine affected States Parties in accordance with the 4P approach. In addition, the Co-Chairs urged States Parties to make use of the Standing Committee and Article 7 reporting to communicate the 4Ps.

Updates were given by Sara Sekkenes of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) Mine Action Working Group, and Stan Brabant (Handicap International Belgium) in the name of the ICBL Mine Risk Education (MRE) Sub-Working Group. They highlighted the necessity to act promptly and efficiently to ensure effective use of the Convention’s 10-year time frame. In order to effectively measure progress made and assess collective challenges remaining, the use of the “4P approach” was encouraged.

The ICBL provided a brief outline of pertinent elements of the Landmine Monitor Article 7 background document, highlighting the increase in the number of Article 7 reports submitted since the last Standing Committee meeting and favourably acknowledging States Parties' reporting on Article 5. The importance of reporting on planning, which has been lacking, was stressed.

The ICBL highlighted a growing number of new MRE programmes, increasingly operated by government ministries, community leaders, local NGOs and Red Cross Societies, as well as needs assessments and planning of future programmes. Elements such as needs assessments, external evaluations, and the creation of international standards have improved the quality of these programmes. Within countries including Burma, Georgia, India, Iran, Nepal and Somalia, however, there continue to be reports of the urgent need for more MRE, and much work remains to be done. The inclusion of MRE needs in Article 7 reporting was strongly encouraged.

III. Update on Implementation Plans and Progress

The Co-Chairs provided an opportunity for updates on implementation plans and progress by those States Parties that have reported mined areas. Several States Parties took advantage of this opportunity, including: the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Afghanistan, Guatemala, Ecuador, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Nicaragua, Peru, Tajikistan, and Malawi. Most States Parties reported on the "4P"s, indicating problems faced such as lack of up-to-date equipment, data and funding, progress made in areas such as MRE and the creation of mine action centres and surveys, and action plans for mine clearance. The need for assistance and co-ordination was noted by most States Parties as a priority in order to meet deadlines according to Article 5 of the Convention.

Two States not Parties, Sri Lanka and Turkey, provided updates on their status in relation to accession to the treaty, with Turkey due to hand in its instrument, together with Greece, in May 2003. An update on Iraq was provided by Martin Barber of UNMAS.

(Note: At the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties, the Co-Chairs intend to provide an updated detailed summary of the important information shared by the mine affected States Parties.)

IV. Cooperation and Assistance between Mine Affected States Parties

The UNDP noted that, as a response to the increasing need for horizontal exchanges among developing countries (south-south co-operation), the UN had made the promotion of co-operation among mine-affected countries one of its highest priorities, reflected in its UN Five-Year Mine Action Strategy. Information sharing by countries with similar challenges, through technical exchanges, equipment pooling and facility sharing, was encouraged. The Mine Action Exchange Programme (MAX), which matches experienced people with countries in need, was highlighted. Participants to date included individuals from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Croatia and Mozambique, with planned exchanges for 2003 envisaged in Albania, Cambodia, Somalia and Yemen. Further expansion of the programme is planned, and support from donors, as well as promotion in national mine action policies, is encouraged.

Norway, in its capacity as Co-ordinator of the Resource Mobilisation Contact Group, thankfully acknowledged States Parties who responded to its questionnaire regarding how co-operation on Resource Mobilisation can be developed between mine-affected countries.

Positive results have already been manifested in, for example, the contribution of Honduras and Nicaragua to mine efforts in Peru, discussions with Yemen and Lebanon, and interest expressed by other African countries in an exchange with Chad.

Sudan expects ratification to be approved imminently, and outlined confidence and peace building measures underway with neighbouring countries, including various landmine action projects and the establishment of a national centre in its capital. Yemen expressed, with reference to Lebanon's recent request for assistance in demining, its willingness but inability to help due to financial constraints. The necessity of a third, donor party, therefore, was stressed.

V. Update on Assistance and Cooperation

The Co-Chairs provided an opportunity for States Parties as well as other organisations to provide an update on their assistance to and co-operation with mine affected States Parties. Statements on new initiatives and funding assistance were made by several States Parties, including by Italy, Japan, Belgium and Cyprus. In addition to reports by these States Parties, the various organisations highlighted initiatives, programmes, and constructive ways in which they are providing co-operation and assistance to States Parties:

Mr. Ulrich-Peter Staudt from the German Landmine Documentation, Information and Training Centre outlined the centre's role in providing assistance, including support for training in various countries, mine awareness programmes and the testing of new equipment. Its three main cells comprise that of evaluation and documentation, evaluation and instruction, and database, the latter being continually updated, currently containing nearly 1000 different mine types. International co-operation is undertaken with NATO and ENTEC, among other partners, and various information resources are provided by the Centre.

Dr. Sabine Machl of the OSCE indicated that the OSCE had earmarked money from this year's budget to respond to Tajikistan's request for mine action aid.

Mr. Christian Berghartbeaten from the International Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO) outlined the important relationship between humanitarian mine action and peace-building. It was pointed out that although mine action has an enormous impact on peace building, mine action in donor policies is emphasised as a security issue with only marginal references to peace building. Three phases of peace-building – reconciliation, confidence building and conflict resolution – were outlined, and the opportunity for a more active role for peace - building in mine action illustrated. Possible drawbacks, including increased risks, and focus and speed reduction of mine action, were also outlined. The need to strengthen conflict sensibility and for regular assessment of the impact of conflicts was stressed.

The GICHD outlined its 2003 to 2005 Strategy. It noted in particular that implementation of Version 3 of Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) began this year, with upgrades underway and translations to be completed this summer. An XML project is also being undertaken to harmonise data. The review board on International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) met this January, for a study on how these international standards have been adapted to national standards. Currently, 27 standards have been endorsed, with 5 new standards in the pipeline. Several research activities and publications were also outlined, including two large programmes on mine detection dogs. Information on publications can be found at www.gichd.ch.

JASMAR, a Sudanese NGO, reported on the creation of the Sudanese association for combating landmines, established in 2001 as a response to the absence of national NGOs in the field. Positive accomplishments towards peace and confidence building, including a ceremony held on 6 April, marking the first time that opposing sides of the conflict had sat together, were outlined. The need for more capacity building was noted.

UNICEF, on behalf of the UN system, reported on UN activities. The UN continues to support 35 mine affected countries, including the piloting of the UN mine action rapid response plan in Iraq. The launching by UNICEF of its 2002 to 2005 mine action strategy was also noted. More detail can be found on the UN mine action website (www.mineaction.org) or through subscription to the UNICEF monthly bulletin by email (landmines@unicef.org).

VI. Update on Mine Action Technologies

Belgium reported on the results of the brainstorming meeting held on 13 May 2003, addressing problems and recommendations for mine action technologies. The main need identified was for the collaboration of end-users, donors and technologists in order to address real rather than assumed needs. The project CWO7 initiative for the standardisation of metal detectors was also elaborated upon, with new testing standards to be developed, as discussed in CEN Workshop 7, hosted by JRC.

Thailand outlined technology developments related to their mine clearance programme, including remote control operated equipment and mine detection dogs.

Sweden described its plans to start work on developing “Workshop Agreements” to provide a baseline standard for the test and evaluation of mechanical assisting equipment, following the CEN procedure for Workshop Agreements. Also open to non-CEN member states, the project will be co-ordinated by the Swedish EOD and Demining Centre, CROMAC and GICHD with support from ITEP. The importance of participation by the demining community was stressed. (Website: www.cenorm.be)

South Africa explained a Technology Certification Process Study, currently being undertaken with support from the European Commission, aimed at establishing an integrated regional capability linked to national programmes and activities. This study centres on the evaluation of three areas: mine detection dog capability, electronic and mechanical equipment and technologies that support mine survivors.

VII. An Assessment of Needs that Remain

The Co-Chairs concluded by suggesting the following suggested tasks, especially given that at the Review Conference States Parties will need to address the extent to which progress has been made as well as challenges remaining between then and 2009:

- that mine affected States Parties should use every possible opportunity to communicate matters related to their national situations, including at Standing Committee meetings, taking full advantage of the “4P approach”;
- that next year’s Co-Chairs continue to promote this approach;
- that those in a position to provide assistance continue efforts to renew commitments to mine action and to communicate these commitments at future meetings;
- that actors continue to pursue a variety of regional approaches to clearing mined areas and fulfilling the other aims of the Convention.