

Norway, Article 5 intervention 10/5/2006

Mr. Co-Chair,

We want to share a few observations and considerations with you.

This morning and afternoon we have heard several interesting and encouraging reports from countries with Article 5 deadlines in 2009 and 2010. We take that as a demonstration that mine affected countries take their treaty obligations seriously.

In connection with yesterday's meeting of the RMCG we circulated a flow chart and check-list to identify actual and possible obstacles to Article 5 implementation and compliance. Time is now running fast, we need to be practical and improve our effectiveness and efficiency.

There is no doubt that many countries suffer severely from a very grave landmine problem. At the same time, Mr Co-chair, there is reason to believe that in many instances the landmine problem is somewhat, not to say largely, inflated.

We, as donors, must ask ourselves some critical questions on how funds are spent and what their effects are. Do we actually achieve what we are aiming for?

We should also ask ourselves whether we have contributed to the building up of a Mine Action industry thriving from easy flowing money, protecting and justifying its continued existence through superfluous, unrealistic Landmine Impact Surveys, lack of operational national plans and priorities etc., etc.

Mr. Co-Chair, of course we will need to continue supporting concrete activities to take mines out of the ground and to clear land.

At the same time, however, we will probably need to redirect our focus to further develop the Concept of Land Release and Area Reduction. This is not in contradiction with the absolute requirement of Article 5 to clear all mined areas.

But there is in fact reason to believe that several countries are closer to Article 5 compliance than generally considered. That should be good news.