

7.2
Nigeria

STATEMENT BY NIGERIA

TO THE MEETING OF THE

STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE AP MINE BAN CONVENTION

GENEVA, 25-29 MAY 2009

As some of you may well be aware, there have been some press reports recently that suggest there might be anti-personnel mines in mined areas in Nigeria. While reports available at the moment are sketchy, we are happy to report that steps are being taken to address problems caused by various explosive remnants of war, a residual problem from a civil war that ended nearly 40 years ago.

It is necessary to point out that it is yet uncertain if the references being made to anti-personnel mines are indeed accurate. Nevertheless, Nigeria knows the Convention's Provisions well. To date, Nigeria has not reported, in accordance with Article 7, "*the location of all mined areas that contain, or are suspected to contain, anti-personnel landmines under its jurisdiction or control*", because there were no mined areas known or suspected to exist in Nigeria. That is the fact, as of today.

However, with the recent news reports that have surfaced, Nigeria now knows that, in accordance with Article 5, paragraph 2, it must "*make every effort to identify all areas under its jurisdiction or control in which anti-personnel mines are known or suspected to be emplaced*". To this end, Nigeria has entered into discussions with the Convention's Implementation Support Unit (ISU), to acquire technical expertise to assist with such an investigation. The ISU has assured it would propose to the European Union that technical assistance funds, made available through the EU's "Joint Action" in support of the Convention, be used for this purpose. The ISU has also identified a technical expert and discussions are underway with a view to proceeding with a visit to the country in July.

Should the results of this technical assessment result in a determination that there are anti-personnel mines in mined

areas under Nigeria's jurisdiction or control, again, Nigeria knows its obligations under the Convention and will proceed with haste to discharge these responsibilities. In this regard, Nigeria, in accordance with Article 7, will report, to the extent possible, the location of all such areas. It will also proceed to act in accordance with Article 5, paragraph 2, to do what is required to *"ensure the effective exclusion of civilians, until all anti-personnel mines contained therein have been destroyed"*.

Moreover, should the result of this technical investigation result in a determination that there are, indeed, anti-personnel mines in mined areas under Nigeria's jurisdiction or control, Nigeria is aware that in accordance with Article 5, paragraph 1, it is obliged *"to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in these mined areas as soon as possible, but not later than ten years after the entry into force"* of the Convention for Nigeria. That is, Nigeria would have a deadline of 1 March 2012 to conclude implementation of Article 5, paragraph 1.

Nigeria is committed to keeping the States Parties informed of its efforts to clarify this situation.

Thank you.