

Closing Remarks by the Co-Chairs

We have now come to the end of this Standing Committee meeting.

The Co-Chairs would like to thank all speakers who have contributed to our deliberations over the past two days.

In our view, we have heard many positive developments.

First among these is the update by a number of states parties that they will be in a position to complete mine clearance in time for the Second Review Conference.

In particular, we congratulate Tunisia on having announced that it has now fulfilled its obligations under Article 5.

Secondly, we have heard from a number of states parties that they will not need to request an extension to their upcoming deadlines.

Thirdly, we have heard that many of the states parties which were granted an extension last year are continuing their efforts to meet the benchmarks set out in their extension request and keeping in mind the 9MSP decisions concerning their requests.

And we have also heard that those three states parties requesting an extension this year are working closely with the Analysing Group to ensure their requests are of the highest possible standard.

However, it is clear from states parties' presentations that challenges lie ahead. In many circumstances, work is not proceeding at the rate we would all like to see.

In the lead-up to Cartagena, we must all work together to ensure that remaining obstacles to implementing obligations under Article 5 "as soon as possible" are addressed and, hopefully, overcome.

I would like to thank all those who contributed to our discussion on Mine Risk Education education. I would particularly like to thank Mr Eric Filipino from GICHD for presenting to us his thoughts on MRE. We are glad that the Co-Chair's non-paper could assist us in our discussions.

We would request that you take some time to consider this non-paper and present us with any views you may have by 19 June. We can then feed

our thinking on MRE into the work being conducted by the President-designate and host of the Second Review Conference.

Finally, we would like to stress one of the major themes that has run through the last two days of meeting: the importance of cooperation and assistance in meeting the aims of the Convention.

The extension request process, as well as the vast majority of presentations, have highlighted the need for continued assistance to mine-affected countries. We encourage all states parties in a position to do so to honour their obligations under Article 6 to provide assistance and cooperation. And we urge all affected states to prioritise mine action in their national plans.

Finally, thank you to the interpreters for their services this week. I understand this is their last day, as the UN Conference Servicing will provide interpretation tomorrow.

On behalf of Mariela and myself, let me also thank our Co-Rapporteurs for their encouragement and support.

We look forward to working closely with all of you as we move forward on the Road to Cartagena to ensure the realisation of a mine-free world.

Thank you.