



Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Twelfth Meeting of States Parties

Mined areas discovered after original or extended deadlines to implement Article 5 have expired

Statement by Australia

5 December 2012

Statement delivered by Ms Namdi Payne, Second Secretary, Australian Permanent Mission, Geneva

Mr President

Australia appreciates the openness of Germany, Hungary and Niger in reporting the discovery of previously unknown minefields on their territory after the completion of Article 5 deadlines. These States have acted in accordance with the spirit of the Convention by bringing States Parties' attention to this matter.

Australia is aware that the situation of new minefields discovered after the expiration of clearance deadlines could occur in other cases, but these cases are the exception. They would be exceptional in the sense that the discovery would come after a decade or more of rigorous survey and clearance of known and suspected mined areas.

Australia views the discovery of previously unknown mined areas as an implementation issue. We presume that any such discovery would not be large – but rather, for example, be a discovery of mines in remote areas, on borders or emplaced as nuisance mines. The discovery could generally be dealt with quickly.

Mr President

Australia welcome the efforts of Indonesia and Zambia as the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance in preparing a proposal for State Parties on how to respond to previously unknown mined areas since this issue was brought to the attention of State Parties. Australia appreciates the consultations undertaken by the Co-Chairs in this regard.

Australia supports the Co-Chairs proposal and encourages State Parties to:

- report immediately to all State Parties of the discovery of previously unknown mined areas under their jurisdictions;
- undertake measures to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in such mined areas as soon as possible;

- request an extended deadline of no more than 10 years in case a State is unable to complete clearance of these mined areas before the next Meeting of the State Parties or Review Conference since the discovery.
- meet their reporting obligations under Article 7 of the Convention.

In line with the proposal by the Co-Chairs, Australia also urges the Analysing Group to continue to be rigorous in assessing the requests for extended deadlines, to ensure the integrity of Article 5 in these exceptional circumstances and that deadline extensions are granted for the shortest possible time.