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**Statement by the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on
Resources, Cooperation and Assistance**

Agenda Item 10f

(Albania and Thailand)

6 December 2012

It has been an honour for Albania and Thailand to serve as the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance.

It was the strong desire of both of us that delegations explore some specific initiatives related to enhancing cooperation and assistance.

We have for over two years now discussed cooperation and assistance in general terms.

These discussions have been useful because they have enabled us to develop a long list of topics to explore in more detail and an inventory of possible ideas for follow-up.

In 2012 our aim was to get past talking about generalities and to proceed with actually advancing the cooperation and assistance agenda.

This point was formally recognised by the 11MSP, which took note of and encouraged action on the concrete ideas suggested by the in-coming Co-Chairs and others to make the best possible use of this new Standing Committee.

During the meeting that we chaired in May, together we focused our attention on three specific matters.

- We highlighted the availability of assistance and procedures to obtain it.
- We explored the options of trust funds to ensure the continuity of resources.
- And we considered the possibility of developing an information exchange tool, or platform for partnerships.

With respect to the availability of assistance and procedures to obtain it, we demonstrated that financial resources are certainly important, but so too is assistance in the form of the experience of mine affected countries and in the form of expertise that exists within demining organizations which have supported our efforts for so many years.

With respect to the options of trust funds to ensure the continuity of resources, we requested that the ISU prepare and present a background paper containing an overview of existing funding models and highlighting options for States Parties to consider regarding the pros and cons of existing or possible new funding mechanisms.

It was noted that the States Parties should certainly not rule out any options, while keeping in mind that the time and money that would go into deliberations on any particular mechanism should be calibrated according to the expected results of such considerations.

It was further noted that, whatever options are pursued, we should not ignore that a great deal of potential exists with respect to mechanisms that are already in place or that could easily come into being at a national level.

In addition, the important role of the full breadth of United Nations trust funds was highlighted, with it noted that the States Parties – as Member States of the United Nations – have the opportunity express how these UN mechanisms could best support implementation.

* Finally, with respect to the possibility of developing an information exchange tool, we used a small group session as part of the work of this Standing Committee to explore this matter in detail.

Questions we asked participants to consider included:

- If an information exchange tool were to be established, what information should it contain? How should it be organized?
- What experiences have actors had in accessing information about available funding, technical support, or other forms of cooperation and assistance for implementation?
- And, what are the gaps in information about available assistance?

This discussion again reinforced the view that all States Parties are potential contributors and therefore any information exchange tool should house information on the assistance that any State Party may be in a position to provide.

It was noted that additional information on available financial assistance may be desirable, but a key aim of the information exchange tool should be to serve as place where those with needs to go to in search of the full range of possible assistance, including technical support and equipment.

It was concluded that an information exchange tool could be developed a trial basis with an evaluation made after a certain period of time.

It was also concluded in that, in the development of an information exchange tool, we should not duplicate existing information mechanisms and note that there is a wealth of existing on-line and other information sources, particularly on financial assistance, including Landmine Monitor and Article 7 reports.

Given the richness of the discussions in May, we continued to pursue ways and means to advance the cooperation and assistance agenda.

We have sought to follow-up on the conclusion that a simple information exchange tool could be established on a trial basis.

To this end, in August, we sent a questionnaire to all States Parties requesting input on the assistance that they could provide, both for mine clearance and victim assistance.

We are grateful that a number of States Parties have responded to this questionnaire already.

Given these responses, the ISU has supported us by working to see how the Convention's existing website can make available the information provided.

You will note that already the ISU has established a "platform for partnerships" button on the Convention's homepage, which provides a description of this initiative.

As we look towards 2013, we would encourage all States Parties to remain focused on the specific ways and means that we can use to advance cooperation and assistance under the Convention.

We thank all of those who supported us in our work in 2012.