



**Statement on Article 7 Reporting
12th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
Geneva, Switzerland
7 December 2012**

Thank you Mr. President.

We would like to say a few words about Article 7 reports as an organization that spends a significant amount of time reading through these reports. As we all know, annual reporting is a legal obligation, intended to help states and the broader mine action community monitor states' progress on treaty implementation. But it can serve this purpose only if reports are submitted on time and with all required information.

Yet as of today, only 56% of States Parties submitted annual reports for calendar year 2011. If you look at the database on the UN website, you can see that this group of states is quite consistent in their reporting, and we applaud them for taking their reporting duty seriously.

On the other hand, we find it alarming that 69 States Parties, or nearly 44% of all States Parties, have not turned in their report this year. Again, we can see a clear pattern among these states, with most failing to report year after year. And yet most of these "repeat offenders" are small, non-affected countries that would only need to fill out a short form to indicate no change in status from previous years. Belgium's proposal for using a note verbale might be one way to make it even easier for them to report.

The group of states that failed to submit a report for 2011 does also include several affected countries, such as Chad, the Republic of Congo, Guinea-Bissau, and Tajikistan. These states have an even more critical need to keep other states informed about their treaty status. It's also in their interest to keep current and potential partners up to date on their progress or challenges.

We strongly encourage States Parties with outstanding reports, especially affected countries, to submit them without further delay. We call special attention to Equatorial Guinea and Tuvalu, which are both late in submitting their initial Article 7 reports – 13 years late in the case of Equatorial Guinea. And we are looking forward to the first submission by Finland by 28 December 2012 and by Somalia by 30 March 2013.

We are pleased with voluntary reports submitted by Palestine and Poland. We hope that other states not party will follow this example, as an indicator of support for, and a concrete contribution to eradication of antipersonnel mines.

As Belgium described in its overview, we also find that the quality of several submitted reports is insufficient. Some are missing entire sections. Many didn't include information on whether or how they have used the mines retained for training purposes. Most of the reports do not provide sufficient or measurable information on victim assistance, which may not be a treaty requirement but is a commitment under the Cartagena Action Plan. We urge all States Parties to ensure their annual transparency reports are comprehensive, transparent and clear.

With these observations in mind, the ICBL would like to support the suggestions made by Belgium on enhancing the quantity and quality of annual reporting. The comprehensive roadmap it outlined should help to increase the rate of compliance in lead up to the Third Review Conference and raise the bar on the quality of such reporting.

Thank you.