

**Notes for ICRC intervention, interactive panel on assessing the Convention's
cooperation and assistance Machinery**

Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, 3 Dec. 2013

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the invitation to participate in this panel. I will try to address the three questions specifically posed in relation to the Convention's cooperation and assistance Machinery.

1. Is the manner in which cooperation and assistance is dealt with informal and formal meetings serving a useful purpose in enhancing implementation efforts?

Resource shortages, and the need to use resources in the most effective way remains among the greatest challenges to fulfilling obligations under the Convention. So it has been very important to maintain cooperation and assistance on the agenda of formal and informal meetings.

Cooperation & Assistance is a cross-cutting issue, relevant to meeting implementation challenges in the fields of victim assistance, mine clearance and stockpile destruction, and even to ensuring national implementation measures under Article 9. So, discussions about resources can either be integrated into those topics or discussed in dedicated sessions.

Having dedicated sessions on Cooperation and Assistance has enabled donors to pass messages, for example about the need for implementing States to demonstrate strong national ownership in order to secure donor support. However, we have heard much less from affected States, who could use this Committee to share their experiences in national and international resource mobilisation, and their remaining needs. Maybe this is difficult in plenary but we would encourage all affected States to maximise this valuable opportunity.

Turning to some of the more specific thematic discussions that have been held on cooperation and assistance since the Second Review Conference in 2009, I think these discussions have been useful. My only reservation is that the outcomes and concrete recommendations resulting from those discussions have not always been recorded in a central place, which is something that I would recommend be considered in future.

- The special informal session on cooperation and assistance in June 2010 was a very important discussion, of which the key outcomes and recommendations were set out in a report submitted by the President of the Second Review Conference to the 10th MSP¹. This remains a helpful resource document to this day.
- The 2-day Tirana Symposium on cooperation & assistance in victim assistance in May-June 2011 was valuable, particularly in emphasising the ongoing importance of the "twin-track" approach to victim assistance funding. However, it would have been helpful to have had a record of the discussions to assist the reflections on this issue since then and to better ensure continuity of approach.

¹ APLC/MSP.10/2010/WP.15

- In our view, the panel at the 2012 Intersessional meetings, whereby the European Union, the Danish Demining Group and Cambodian Mine Action Authority presented the assistance they might be able to provide to others, provided useful information. The recording of those presentations, for example on the recently established Platform for Partnerships, could facilitate access to this information by affected States Parties.
- The “small group” discussion during the 2012 Intersessional meetings on cooperation and assistance was a very good format for discussion – and several people thought it was one of the best discussions on this subject within the framework of the Convention. Again, the key conclusions and recommendations could be recorded in a central place.
- The Bangkok Symposium on cooperation & assistance in June 2013 was also very useful, notably in reflecting on different sources of funding for victim assistance, while underscoring the importance of maintaining specific services for victims when required. We are pleased to note that a report of that event has been issued.

2. Is the Standing Committee on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance meeting expectations that delegations had for it when it was established? How can this mechanism best be used?

There were many expectations of this Committee when it was established and the Committee can probably not meet *all* of those expectations. But I think it has met some of those expectations, thanks to the good work of its Co-Chairs, and that more can be done in the future.

Let us recall some of the initial goals & expectations of the Standing Committee on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance.

The driving force behind the establishment of the Committee was that there were never sufficient resources to meet the many competing needs of mine-affected States, many of whom were coming out of armed conflict and facing huge reconstruction and development needs. This concern remains as valid today as it was in 2009, as highlighted by the majority of African States participating in the AU-ICRC clearance workshop in March 2013 in Addis Ababa.

As a way to address this challenge, Zambia, which officially proposed the Committee’s establishment, recommended that the Committee be used as a vehicle for exchanging information and developing plans and strategies to ensure both resource mobilization and resource utilisation. Zambia was also keen to advance greater south-south cooperation.

The proposal built on the Cartenga Action Plan, in particular Action 48, which provides that States Parties will: “Ensure that the Convention and its informal mechanisms include and provide a specific and effective framework for identifying needs and mobilising national and international resources to meet these needs.” This Committee provides such a framework.

The Committee cannot do everything, and bilateral relationships will remain very important, but it can promote discussion of relevant issues and share lessons-learned.

Most of the issues raised during the Special Session on International Cooperation & Assistance in June 2010 still warrant specific and detailed discussion. Since one of the original goals was

to ensure continuity in the discussions on Cooperation and Assistance, it would be useful to revert to some of the important points raised at that time, rather than trying to re-invent the wheel.

For example, I am not aware of any detailed discussion on the very good proposal made in 2010 to engage non-traditional sources of mine action support, such as the private or banking sectors or national sports associations. Similarly, the Committee has not yet discussed concerns about improving donor coordination, including with States receiving assistance.

Perhaps a dedicated discussion in 2014 or even 2015 (either for all affected States Parties or through regional workshops) would be useful in exploring some of those issues in more depth. Such a discussion could be aimed at developing concrete proposals and recommendations, which would be relevant not just for this Convention community but for States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. It would be particularly interesting to hear the perceptions and ideas of affected States on these issues.

3. What kind of information related to cooperation and assistance do different delegations value and why? Is the *platform for partnerships* a useful way of sharing this information or is there a need for complimentary measures, such as amendments to the reporting format?

The ICRC considers the **Platform for Partnerships** to be an excellent initiative that could provide information for affected States on both resource mobilisation and resource utilisation. Unfortunately, until now that potential has been largely under-utilised.

We would therefore encourage all States and organisations able to offer support to share relevant information with the ISU for posting on this platform. We would also encourage the Co-Chairs and the ISU to proactively and creatively seek out information to include on the platform, and to continue contacting States and relevant organisations for input and updates. If States Parties wish to include relevant information in annual transparency reports, this would also be possible, but we would nonetheless recommend that such information be extracted into the Platform for Partnerships to ensure it is readily available without having to visit different websites.

We would also recommend including on the Platform all relevant documents on Cooperation & Assistance, so they can be found in one easily accessible place. This should include the outcomes of the various thematic discussions within the framework of the Convention and statements made during informal and formal meetings. It could also include discussions in other fora that are relevant to meeting implementation challenges under this Convention. For example, during the UN Programme Directors meeting earlier this year, there was a very good discussion on “South-South Cooperation”, the outcomes of which could be shared with all affected States Parties to this Convention. Similarly, some useful suggestions were made during the ICRC – African Union workshop on meeting clearance obligations in March this year, which are recorded in the workshop report and which we would be happy to share.

The Platform could also include information on training opportunities provided, for example, by the Jordan National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation or the CPADD in Benin. The inclusion of such information could transform the Platform into a living tool.

At the end of the day, this Committee was created to serve affected States and if those States do not yet know where to go for information about resource mobilisation, or lessons learned about resource utilisation, the Committee's work is not yet done. So it is very important that affected States Parties engage with it and share their views on what is required and can realistically be achieved. I hope during this discussion that we will hear from affected States as to what suggestions they might have for making this Committee as effective and useful as possible in future.