

Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

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Consideration of the general status and operation of the Convention

Cooperation and Assistance: Conclusions and
recommendations related to the mandate of the Committee
on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance

Conclusions of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance

Submitted by the Committee on the Enhancement of
Cooperation and Assistance (Algeria, Canada, the
Netherlands and Uganda)

I. Report on the Committee's Activities

A. Introduction

1. In implementing its mandate, the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance (the Committee) focused on three areas of work: the individualised approach, the Platform for Partnerships and mapping needs and challenges.
2. Since the Fifteenth Meeting of the States Parties, the chair of the Committee has convened approximately 14 Committee meetings. These meetings included internal meeting of the Committee to discuss different aspects of the Committee's work, as well as meetings with the different Committees of the Convention and meetings with diverse stakeholders, including affected States Parties, in preparation for their participation in the individualised approach as well as with those interested in learning more about and participating in the individualised approach.
3. Lastly, the Committee reported its progress in implementation to the Coordinating Committee.

B. Individualised approach

4. As part of the Committee's mandate to facilitate the fostering of partnerships between States Parties seeking to receive assistance and those in a position to provide such assistance, and in follow-up to the recommendations contained in the Committee's conclusions submitted to the Fifteenth Meeting of States Parties (15MSP), in particular in Annex 1, the Committee continued the development and implementation of the individualised approach to cooperation and assistance.

5. Following the first pilot meeting with Croatia, held on the margins of the 15MSP, the Committee met with a number of relevant stakeholders, including states, to identify lessons learned with a view to improving the methodology. The Committee also held a number of meetings with States Parties that requested additional information and showed interest in taking advantage of the individualised approach. In order to facilitate understanding of the methodology, the Committee prepared a one pager on the individualised approach (see annex 1).

6. On the margins of the 8-9 June 2017 intersessional meetings, a meeting of the individualised approach was held with Sudan, in which Sudan presented its needs and challenges in implementing the Convention followed by a discussion with invited participants. In preparation for this meeting, taking into account the lessons learnt from the pilot meeting with Croatia, meeting material, such as a presentation by Sudan and a detailed agenda with questions for participants to consider, were sent well ahead of the meeting to participants selected by Sudan. The Committees on Victim Assistance and the Committee on Article 5 Implementation were also invited to attend this meeting in order to continue strengthening cooperation between Committees of the Convention.

7. In order to continue improving the approach, a survey was sent to participants following the Sudan meeting to obtain feedback. The remarks were overall positive, although it was emphasised that, when required, high quality interpretation is an important element for a successful meeting. A final report was prepared by the Committee and Sudan and after an evaluation meeting on the margins of the Seventh Meeting of the States Parties of the Cluster Munition Convention, Sudan and the Committee finalised and distributed the report at the end of September 2017. Sudan informed the Committee that there had been follow-up in Sudan following the June individualised approach meeting with a number of country representatives approaching the Sudanese Mine Action Centre. For Sudan, the individualised approach is not viewed as a one-time event but as part of a process of increased dialogue amongst stakeholders, the Committee and Sudan agreed to continue their dialogue.

8. Following consultation with a number of States Parties interested in participating in the individualised approach, the Committee initiated its coordination with these states, with the view of holding activities on the margins of the Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties. Zimbabwe and the Committee will host a meeting on the margins of the Sixteenth Meeting of States Parties. The Committee is currently in consultations with other States Parties interested in participating in the individualised approach.

C. Platform for Partnerships

9. As part of its mandate to look at the use of information exchange tools to foster partnerships between States Parties, the Committee explored ways to take further advantage of the Convention's existing Platform for Partnerships. In a letter sent by the Committee dated 8 February 2017, the Committee highlighted its priorities and encouraged States Parties to provide new or updated information or feedback on the functioning of the Platform. Unfortunately, the Committee did not receive any such input.

10. The Committee considered different options to improve the use of the Platform for Partnerships, including the possibility of adding an online tool to facilitate Article 7 reporting by States Parties and encourage additional information on the challenges faced and which may encourage improved use of and faster access to the information submitted. This would follow the framework of the Guide to Reporting adopted by the States Parties at the 14MSP. Consideration was also given to including an online tool which could include an additional voluntary form for sharing information on a public and/or password protected section of the Platform.

11. Following feedback from the Coordinating Committee, the Committee developed and distributed a survey to all States Parties in order to enquire for what purposes they would use the Platform for Partnerships tool and how the current Platform could be enhanced to better meet their needs, in order to determine whether going forward with expanding the Platform would be worthwhile.

12. Overall, the 20 survey respondents were willing to contribute to the Platform. The majority also welcomed the possibility of an option to complete Article 7 reports online, and the possibility of transferring Article 7 report information to the Platform. One key finding is that the use of the Platform by States Parties implementing obligations under the Convention would be one of the biggest determining factors for use by others, and that most such states participating in the survey would be willing to share most of the information that other respondents wanted to know. Nearly half of respondents were also open to participation by States not party to the Convention, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, while most others were undecided.

D. Mapping needs and challenges

13. On 8 February 2017, the Committee sent a letter to States Parties to encourage them to include information on their needs and challenges within their Article 7 reports.

14. In addition to writing to States Parties, the Committee engaged in a dialogue with the Committee on Victim Assistance and the Committee on Article 5 Implementation, with a view to also engage them in the individualised approach. A wealth of information has been recorded by both Committees in terms of challenges faced by States Parties in implementation of their Article 5 mine clearance obligations as well as challenges in providing assistance to victims in accordance with the Maputo Action Plan. As a result, the Committees provided valuable input at the Sudan individualised approach meeting. Furthermore, the Committee had a fruitful exchange of views with the Committee on Article 5 Implementation on establishing priorities taking into account deadlines of States Parties under Article 5.

II. Conclusions

15. Based on the work conducted by the Committee between the 15MSP and 16MSP, the Committee draws the following conclusions:

A. Individualised approach

16. The approach seems, thus far, effective in focusing on the concrete challenges and needs of a specific State Party in implementing the objectives of the Convention. It emphasises the collective efforts of both affected States and States in a position to provide assistance in implementing the Convention. It offers a useful platform for affected states to present their challenges and needs. The individualised approach has generated significant interest, as a number of other interested States Parties approached the Committee for additional information following the initial meetings on the margins of the 15MSP. In order to facilitate the work of the Committee in the future, the Committee has developed templates for the realisation of meetings of the individualised approach. In the long term, it may be worthwhile exploring whether other Committees under the Convention or other States Parties can participate more actively in this approach. The Committee considers it important that the activities of the individualised approach can translate into dialogues at the national level. In these cases, where the contribution of the Geneva-based Committees may be more difficult, collaboration could be sought with national partners. An example could be that one or two mine action donors or regional partners to a given affected state, or an accredited international or non-governmental organisation, could assist with the preparation of meetings in collaboration with the interested State Party. In such cases, the Committee could continue to serve in an advisory or coordinating capacity.

B. Platform for Partnerships

17. Given the limited uptake of the Platform for Partnerships, and the potential value of an online electronic tool to facilitate the coordination of information sharing on the implementation of the Convention, it is worth considering methods to improve the Platform for Partnerships in order to increase its value and use. The Committee therefore thanks and recognises the contribution of those States Parties that took part in the recent survey on the Platform for Partnerships conducted by the Committee.

18. The survey results are an indication that the Platform for Partnerships will only be useful if States Parties provide input, and if they also access information through it in order to improve coordination. Some gains may be able to be made through awareness raising. However, no matter which system is used, its success will be based on engagement and participation of States Parties. Significant changes to the Platform would require a financial investment. In order to make the case for this, it would be important to see greater uptake by states in use of the currently available tools.

19. At this stage, the Committee recommends that States Parties contribute to the current version of the Platform by providing national contacts, and update this information regularly. The Committee also recommends that interested States Parties provide information for the ISU to update their country page on the Convention's website, in particular to outline any national mine action processes, structures, and policies. Other systems by which States Parties could update their information by themselves will be explored together with the ISU over the coming year. Such systems could include an option for online completion of Article 7 reports which would make information on affected states' needs and challenges, and information on support provided by States in a position to do so, more accessible.

C. Cooperation with other Committees to map needs and challenges

20. Regular dialogue and cooperation prove effective to move implementation forward across the Convention. As cooperation and assistance is the so-called 'other side of the coin' to the obligations of the Convention for affected States Parties, cooperation with the Committee on Victim Assistance and the Committee on Article 5 Implementation is only logical. The input of these Committees for the individualised approach is particularly valuable. The Committee on Article 5 Implementation could for example assist in highlighting priorities related to States Parties implementing Article 5 including their mine clearance deadlines, while the Committee on Victim Assistance could be of assistance when addressing victim assistance issues as part of a country's individualised approach.

Annex

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Cooperation and Assistance Individualised Approach

Individualised approach

1. In order to advance the goals of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the specific aspiration agreed at its Maputo Review Conference, to accomplish all outstanding obligations under this Convention, to the fullest extent possible, by 2025, the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance (The Committee) is supporting interested affected states to engage in an individualised approach. This approach aims to facilitate a platform for individual affected states to provide – on a voluntary, informal basis – detailed information on the challenges they face and their needs with the aim of fulfilling the remaining obligations of the Convention in an effective and expedient way. It provides an opportunity to connect with the donor community (including possible partners for South-South or regional cooperation), mine action operators, and other stakeholders. National ownership by the interested affected States Party is of the essence.
2. The interested affected state, with support from the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance, decides how the individualised approach will be organised. It determines who should participate in the meeting(s) and what the format will be. It can also decide where to hold the meetings. The meetings could be held on the margins of the intersessional meetings or Meetings of States Parties (MSPs) or Review Conferences, or even outside of Geneva and not in connection with international meetings, although Committee support may be limited due to resources in this latter instance. The Committee can offer suggestions on the basis of previous experience and lessons learned. At each meeting, the affected state will have the opportunity to take stock of the current situation in its country and shed light on outstanding issues and challenges, thereby increasing transparency and supporting information exchange. This could then help to facilitate possible new partnerships toward completion of the affected states' obligations and commitments.

Example of a meeting structure

- I. Introduction by the Chair of the Committee on the individualised approach
 - II. Presentation by the interested/affected State Party on the status, needs and challenges in implementation of its obligations under the Convention and commitments under the Maputo Action Plan
 - a) Circumstances, needs and challenges in mine clearance
 - b) Circumstances, needs and challenges in stockpile destruction
 - c) Challenges and needs in providing mine risk reduction and education programmes
 - d) Challenges and needs in implementing victim assistance
 - e) Action the interested/affected State Party undertakes nationally to advance the norms of the Convention and to ensure compliance with it
 - f) Sharing the expertise of the interested/affected State Party in mine action through bilateral, regional and international cooperation
 - III. Discussion with participants on the information presented
 - IV. Conclusion
3. Follow up to these meetings could include, at the discretion of the affected State Party, outcomes such as reports which can be shared with participants, subsequent meetings (in

Geneva and/or in the affected state), information sharing, development of contact lists, enhancement of national reporting and/or the platform for partnerships.

Background

4. With the common 2025 goal in mind, States Parties have to look carefully both at the progress made and at the remaining challenges. As of present, 32 States Parties have outstanding mine clearance obligations (article 5) and 29 have indicated to have a responsibility for a high number of mine survivors and are faced with the challenge to provide assistance to victims in accordance with the Maputo Action Plan. Affected States Parties face a number of challenges, which differ widely between states, of a financial, technical, and/or political nature. There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach and, as such, it could be useful to support individual States Parties through tailored approaches. On this basis, the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance recommended in its report submitted for the Fifteenth Meeting of the States Parties (15MSP) to engage in individualised approaches. This recommendation was subsequently welcomed by the 15MSP.

Contact

5. Interested States Parties/Questions? Please contact the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance c/o the Implementation Support Unit: isu@apminebanconvention.org
