



17th MSP to the Ottawa Convention

Statement

Clearing mined areas

Ambassador Sabrina Dallafior

* * * * *

17^{ème} Assemblée des États Parties à la Convention d'Ottawa

Déclaration

Nettoyage des zones minées

Ambassadeur Sabrina Dallafior

Geneva, 29.11.2018

Madam President,

Taking the floor for the first time, allow me, at the outset, to thank you and your team for the leadership you have shown during the course of the year and for the organization of this important meeting. We would also like to congratulate Mauritania for having fulfilled its clearance obligations.

Switzerland is pleased to chair the *Committee on Article 5 Implementation*. We would like to seize this opportunity to thank the Committee members, Chile, Colombia and the Netherlands, as well as the ISU, for all the work done in the course of this year. The Committee has the important task of reviewing information provided by the still numerous States Parties with outstanding obligations under Article 5, and in particular to analyse the submitted extension requests in a cooperative manner. It plays a key role under the Convention and contributes to meet the 2025 completion objective.

While the continuing high number of extension requests is a concern for my country, we would like to commend the efforts of the States Parties affected by landmines to uphold their commitment towards the Convention. Despite the very challenging situations they face, we see a strong commitment to move forward in the cooperative spirit of our Convention.

We would like to thank those States submitting an extension request this year for their readiness to engage with the Committee. We welcome in particular Ukraine's submission thereby addressing the serious concerns expressed by States Parties regarding its compliance with its Article 5 obligations.

Madam President,

As underlined in the Committee's report, a number of challenges need to be met if this body is to be in a position to effectively fulfil its purpose and to reach our common completion objective.

The work of the Committee and its capacity to fulfil its mandate depends on the submission of timely and detailed transparency reports, extension requests as well as work plans describing achievements and remaining challenges. We welcome that the great majority of State Parties with Article 5 obligations have submitted transparency reports and that the number of reports submitted as well as their quality has increased. Nonetheless, a number of transparency reports, extension requests and work plans were submitted after deadlines had expired, or are still pending. We invite those affected States Parties that still have to do so to submit their transparency report or updated information or work plans as swiftly as possible.

In terms of quality, Switzerland is convinced that the use of the Guide to Reporting is essential and encourages all States Parties to use it.

Another challenge is the one represented by the discovery of mined areas, including newly mined areas, after the deadline to implement Article 5 has expired. We would like to recall that the way to address these cases was agreed upon at the 12th Meeting of States Parties. The decisions taken by the Meeting of the States Parties over the last two years confirm that a failure to submit an extension request in accordance with the Convention and the agreed processes established by the States Parties constitutes a case of non-compliance under the Convention. The decisions also confirm that the period of ten years referenced in Article 5.1 of the Convention starts at the entry into force of the Convention for that State Party, including for States that face situations with previously unknown mined areas, or newly mined areas, discovered within this ten-year period. I would also like to underline that the Convention is an important International Humanitarian Law instrument, which applies and must be implemented in all circumstances by any State Party and which does not allow for derogations from its provisions.

Lastly, we are concerned with the new contamination resulting from the use of anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature, which are taking a heavy toll on civilians. It is important to recognize that these devices fall under the definition of anti-personnel landmines and are therefore prohibited under the Convention. We consequently call upon all State Parties affected by anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature to include them in their demining plans and destroy them as required by Article 5, as

well as to report on progress and challenges in tackling these devices as required by Article 7.

Thank you Madam President.