



18th MSP to the Convention on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and on their destruction

Statement

Clearing mined areas and mine risk education and reduction

Mister President,

Allow me to thank you and your team for the leadership you have shown and for ensuring the organization of this important meeting under the current challenging circumstances.

Article 5 plays a key role in the Convention. Our collective objective to end the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines will in part be measured by how effective we have been in clearing mined areas. We therefore cannot but insist on the need to increase the pace of clearance activities. In this regard, we would like to congratulate Chile and the United Kingdom for having fulfilled their clearance obligations, underlining that with the necessary commitment it is possible to eliminate the threat posed by these weapons.

The monitoring table tracking the status of the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan together with the priorities for implementation developed by the Coordination Committee give us a precise indication of the areas that need improvement and of the measures to be adopted to proceed steadily in the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan. Although much has already been done in this regard, a number of affected States Parties still have to develop an accurate baseline of contamination as well as national work plans. There is also room for improvement when affected States Parties report on progress, which should happen in a manner consistent with IMAS and in accordance with the land release methodology.

We would also like to underline three challenges related to the implementation of Article 5 we have been confronted with over the last years:

- The timely submission of extension requests when original or extended deadlines cannot be respected is a key element in view of fulfilling Article 5 obligations. The decisions taken by the Meeting of the States Parties over the last years confirm that a failure to submit an extension request constitutes a case of non-compliance under the Convention. We have duly taken note of the report by the Article 5 Committee. The fact that Eritrea did not make use of the process collectively agreed to by the 7th Meeting of the States Parties and failed to comply with its Article 5 obligations is a matter of serious concern. We therefore call upon Eritrea to submit its extension request as soon as possible;
- Another challenge we have been facing is the one represented by the discovery of previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas, after the clearance obligations have been fulfilled. The State Party in question has the obligation to inform all States Parties of this discovery and if the contamination cannot be addressed swiftly, an extension request should be submitted. We would like to thank Mauritania and Nigeria for having acted upon the decisions taken during the 12th MSP;
- Lastly, the high number of casualties of anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature remains a source of concern. As indicated by the Oslo Action Plan, 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 and demanded by Action 21 of the Oslo Action Plan.

Thank you Mister President.