

**ICBL Intervention on Transparency and Exchange of Information:
Article 7
Sixth Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
Zagreb, Croatia
1 December 2005
Delivered by Stephen Goose, Human Rights Watch, Head of Delegation**

Mr. Chairman, the ICBL supports the proposal put forward by Argentina and Chile for expanded reporting under Article 7 on antipersonnel mines retained for training or development purposes. We urge all States Parties to agree to this modified Article 7 form, and strongly encourage all States Parties that have chosen to retain antipersonnel mines to use the new form in a comprehensive way from now on. The proposal as amended this week is not as strong as the original one. As Argentina has indicated, it is less precise. But it is still a useful and important initiative that will help guard against any abuse of the most notable exception of the Mine Ban Treaty—the Article 3 exception permitting retention of mines for specific purposes.

This initiative will also help to ensure that States Parties are diligently following the treaty requirement that the number of mines retained must be, to quote the treaty, “the minimum number absolutely necessary.” Every State Party that decides to retain antipersonnel mines should go through a detailed process of determining what the absolutely minimum number is, and should re-assess that number on a regular basis.

The new, expanded form is of course voluntary in that the information it requests is not explicitly specified in Article 7. However, the new form is first and foremost the realization of Action Point 54 of the Nairobi Action Plan—an Action and a Plan formally adopted by States Parties. Thus, all those who retain mines should feel a duty to utilize the new form, and to do so in a thorough way that fulfills Action Point 54, which states that “States Parties will...provide information on the plans requiring retention of mines...and report on the actual use of retained mines and the results of such use.”

Mr. Chairman, more generally, we would like to thank Belgium for its thorough presentation on implementation of Article 7, and for the very fine work it has done as chair of the Article 7 contact group. We agree that the 96 percent compliance rate for submission of initial Article 7 transparency reports is very impressive, as is the trend toward an ever-higher compliance rate each year. We strongly encourage those few remaining non-compliant states to meet this important treaty obligation as soon as possible, including Cameroon, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guyana, and Sao Tome and Principe.

It is disturbing that, in contrast to initial reporting, the compliance rate for the required annual updated Article 7 reports has fallen to 70 percent in 2005, with a total of 42 missing reports. All States Parties need to observe this treaty requirement, and there should be no slacking off in the wake of the re-commitment of States Parties at the First Review Conference last year. It is particularly important that those states that are mine-

affected, that have mine survivors, or that have not yet completed stockpile destruction produce on-time and detailed annual reports. We echo Belgium's call for timely and complete reporting, using all forms, by all States Parties, and assure you that the ICBL will respond to Belgium's call to remain dedicated to promotion and facilitation of such reporting.

We were very pleased with Morocco's announcement earlier this week that it will submit a voluntary Article 7 report in the near future. We hope that other non-States Parties will follow this example, as an indicator of support for, and a concrete contribution to, the shared objective of the complete eradication of antipersonnel mines.

Thank you.