

NORWAY

Mr President,

I am sorry to take the floor in the General Debate, but like others have mentioned today, this Meeting of State Parties is of great importance for the Mine Ban Convention.

This meeting of states parties shall for the first time review Article V extension requests. At the Sixth Meeting of States Parties three years ago, Norway raised the issue of how we as a community would respond to this critical juncture in the implementation of the convention. Since then, this community has invested extensive efforts to ensure adequate, systematic and substantial procedures for development, submission and review of the requests.

On this background, we will commend the work of the Analysis group led by HRH Prince Mired - competently supported by the ISU -, and the thorough review presented to us by the ICBL.

Overall Norway is impressed with the quality of the final extension requests. Some years back, there was an unfounded fear that these extension requests would allow for an easy way around compliance with the core provisions in the Convention.

Thanks to the extensive preparatory work, we are presented with a set of requests containing a wealth of updated data on the remaining mine problem and the resources available and needed to address it. The extension requests have resulted in revised, but also more realistic, national plans for article V compliance, for most of the requesting countries.

However, in the light of the diligence demonstrated by the majority of the fifteen States Parties presenting an extension request, we are obliged to note serious concern regarding the quality of a few of them. Some state parties seems not to have made substantial efforts to clear the mined areas that their extension request concerns. Their requests also fail to provide us with convincing plans for how they intend to clear the affected areas in the requested time period. We look forward to any complementary information on this issue in the coming days. Article V implementation is crucial to the credibility of the Convention.

Mr. President.

The implementation of Article 4 on Stockpile Destruction has been one of the significant measures of the success of the Mine Ban Convention. An impressive and amazing number of stockpiled antipersonnel mines have

been destroyed over the last 10 years. More than 40 million mines will no longer be a danger to human beings.

Article 4 of the Mine Ban Convention has a clear deadline for destruction, but does not contain any extension clause, because at the time of the adoption of the Mine Ban Convention, no-one believed that any state would need more than four years to destroy their stockpiles.

Now we find ourselves in a situation where there are some state parties that have failed to comply with their article 4 obligation. When such situations occur, it is extremely important that they are dealt with in an orderly manner. We look forward to reports from the state parties in question on how they will comply with their obligations as soon as possible. Transparency and specific plans on how the matter will be solved is essential.

We also appeal to all State Parties with deadlines coming up soon, to do their utmost to destroy all stockpiles within time. We urge them to report on their plans and progress in a transparent and concrete manner to the other State Parties. The paper presented by the co-chairs of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction gives good guidance on how both these situations can be approached.

Mr.President.

We must not forget for whom we are doing mine action – the women, girls, boys and men in mine affected areas worldwide. They are the ones who suffer when we as States Parties do not meet our obligations in the Convention.

We must not forget that different people - women, girls, boys and men – may be affected by and respond differently to landmine accidents and mine action response. The actions we are undertaking hence need to be tailored to meet these varied needs.

States Parties must fulfil their responsibilities based on these facts. Even though the gender aspect of mine action has been discussed for some years, implementation has been too slow. Nevertheless, we now have experience and lessons learned that provide guidance for further action.

Integrating gender in mine action has proved to improve the quality of the activities and has a positive impact on the results. If we neglect these crucial matters, we will not only contribute to further reinforcement of gender stereotypes, but we will also delay effective mine action, development and growth prospects. Thank you.