

**Preliminary Observations**  
**Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance**  
**(Mexico, Netherlands, Switzerland, Uganda)**

**Intersessional Meetings**

**19-20 May 2016**

**I. Report on the Committee's Activities**

**a. Introduction**

The purpose of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance (henceforth: the Committee) is to assist the States Parties in the full implementation of article 6 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (henceforth: the Convention). The Committee is mandated to promote cooperation and assistance, facilitate the fostering of partnerships, coordinate with other implementation mechanisms, present preliminary observations at intersessional meetings if need be, and present conclusions and recommendations, if relevant, at Meetings of the States Parties or Review Conferences.

**b. Objectives of the Committee**

The Committee hosted an informal meeting for affected States and donors on the margins of the Fourteenth Meeting of the States Parties on 01 December 2015. The Committee requested participating States to provide inputs concerning the best way to achieve its mandate as set out at the Third Review Conference in Maputo.

Building on the outcomes of this exchange of views and taking into account Actions 19-24 of the Maputo Action Plan as well as past efforts and experiences of the Committee and the ambition of States Parties to meet our goals to the fullest extent possible by 2025, the Committee decided to work towards the following objectives:

- i. The first objective of the Committee is to contribute to the overall understanding of the challenges in the implementation of the Convention. The Committee hence aims at mapping the needs and challenges of States Parties in implementing obligations related to article 4 (destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines) and to article 5 (destruction of anti-personnel mines in mined areas) as well in providing assistance to victims in accordance with the Maputo Action Plan.
- ii. Secondly, the Committee explores different platforms best suited for States Parties to engage in a genuine dialogue regarding needs, challenges and possible solutions.
- iii. Thirdly, the Committee aims at promoting partnerships between States Parties with needs and States Parties in a position to assist. The Committee is exploring how to improve the use of the existing Platform for Partnerships information exchange tool available on the Convention's homepage.

**c. Approaches**

*With regard to objective (i) – mapping needs and challenges*

Recognising that achieving this objective may require significant involvement and contributions both by States Parties with pending obligations under articles 4 and 5 as well as those facing challenges in providing assistance to victims in accordance with the Maputo Action Plan and by States in a position to provide assistance, the Committee decided to first engage with other committees under the

Convention. The thematic committees on the Implementation of article 5 and on Victim Assistance as well as the Presidency through its mandate related to the implementation of article 4 are primary sources of information to advance towards this objective.

Based on the cross cutting nature of the Committee's work, the Committee sought to strengthen synergies and greater information exchange with the thematic committees of the Convention to support a comprehensive approach to the Convention's implementation. Based on the information obtained from the respective committees on the challenges faced by States Parties with pending obligations under Article 4 and 5 as well as in providing assistance to victims in accordance with the Maputo Action Plan, the Committee is currently developing a first draft which aims at mapping challenges and needs. In order to confirm and further enhance this draft, the Committee envisages the possibility of direct engagement with States Parties and in a second phase eventually complementing this mapping with information provided by other partners, such as UN agencies and non-governmental organisations. States Parties will at all times be in control of the information included in the needs and challenges matrix as it will only be made available to all States Parties with the consent of the concerned States Parties.

*With regard to objective (ii) – platforms to engage in genuine dialogue to overcome needs*

In accordance with its mandate and as a complement to the mapping of challenges and needs, the Committee is currently reflecting on how to best advance discussions and activities to address challenges faced by States Parties. Various platforms or formats are imaginable and currently explored by the Committee to advance this dialogue.

In the view of the Committee such a platform should facilitate the following points:

- interaction among States Parties having pending obligations under articles 4 and 5 as well as with challenges in providing assistance to victims in accordance with the Maputo Action Plan and States Parties in a position to provide assistance;
- identification of needs and challenges faced by States Parties in implementing the Convention;
- development of solutions to the identified needs and challenges; and
- foster the building of partnerships with a view to ensure local ownership and contribute to meet the Convention's goals to the fullest extent possible by 2025.

These are preliminary elements that will continue to guide the work of the Committee in exploring this second objective.

*With regard to objective (iii) – platform for partnership*

In line with Action #24 of the Maputo Action Plan, *“all States Parties will contribute [...] to the information exchange tool ‘Platform for Partnerships’ and will provide new or updated information on their needs for assistance or on assistance which they are in a position to offer”*. The Platform for Partnerships is a useful, simple and cost effective information exchange tool incorporated into the Convention's website. It allows States Parties to share and consult updated information on available assistance (financial, equipment, expertise and experience), disaggregated by mine clearance and victim assistance.

In the Committee's view, this simple tool has the potential to support and develop the partnerships among the States Parties. Considering that it has been underused, the Committee cannot currently conclude that it is a tool effectively contributing to the objectives of the convention.

In order to render the tool more efficient, the Committee wrote a letter to all States Parties asking for two inputs:

- to provide new or updated information on assistance a State Party is in a position to provide; and
- To provide feedback as regards the utility of the platform and potential ways to make it more palatable and useful to States Parties.

The Committee thanks those States Parties that have provided information to the Platform and encourages all States Parties to provide new or updated information. The Committee further invites all States Parties seeking assistance to make the best use of this information mechanism.

## **II. Preliminary Observations**

Based on the work conducted by the Committee between the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties and the current Intersessional Meetings and on the objectives pursued by the Committee, the Committee wishes to present the following preliminary observations:

- a. International cooperation and assistance is a crucial part of the Convention and represents a commitment shared by all States Parties to ensure the Convention's full implementation as enshrined in its article 6. Of the Maputo Action Plan's 31 Actions, 6 are dedicated to international cooperation and assistance for achieving the Convention's aims.

Cooperation and assistance amounts to both important rights and obligations under the Convention and constitutes the heart and soul of the Convention. States Parties have the right to seek and receive assistance where feasible, from other States Parties to the extent possible. States Parties in a position to do so shall provide assistance for mine victims, mine awareness programmes such as mine risk education, mine clearance and related activities, and the destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines.

It appears that achieving the 2025 objective as set out in the Maputo Declaration will require enhanced and more focused cooperation and assistance.

- b. Enhanced cooperation and assistance will need effective exchange of information between States Parties. Mapping challenges and needs hence is a necessary basis in order to understand and identify effective implementation gaps to be filled to advance towards the 2025 objective. States Parties have adequate procedures to make such challenges known to the wider community. The Guide to Reporting adopted at the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties leaves enough freedom of action for States Parties to provide relevant information.

Both the number and the content of the article 7 reports provided by States Parties do not, however, permit to conduct the mapping of challenges and needs with the necessary accuracy. States Parties are hence encouraged to provide as much information as possible through article 7 reports and any other manner deemed appropriate enabling the Committee to advance towards its objective.

- c. Existing information exchange formats provide opportunities to States Parties to express their needs and challenges as well as their assistance opportunities. Exploring how additional formats involving directly affected states and stakeholder to exchange information and address pertinent needs and challenges in confidence might be pertinent to contribute to advance the 2025 objective.
- d. Cooperation and assistance does not only relate to financial support. It also relates to the efficient and effective use of scarce resources. In this regard, the Platform for Partnerships is timely to exchange information on the breadth of assistance available to implement the Convention. Other forms of assistance besides financial support are indeed valuable such as availability of expertise, provision of equipment, exchange of experience, technical know-how, and best practices sharing.

The Platform for Partnerships is, however, only as useful as States Parties want it to be. States Parties are encouraged to provide inputs, how such a tool can be best adapted to the needs of the membership.

- e. The work related to the enhancement of cooperation and assistance is not limited to the activity of this Committee. In order to perform its mandate, the Committee endeavours to improve its coordination not only with the other committees under this Convention but also with other committees under other conventions.

### **III. Expectations**

What outcomes can States Parties expected from the Committee? The Committee hopes to contribute to (i) enhanced exchange of information, specifically related to needs and challenges, to (ii) explore possible formats that will contribute to enhance dialogue to address needs and challenges and to (iii) contribute to ensure that current tools, such as the Platform for Partnerships, are used in the most efficient way possible.

As the desired impact of the Committee's work, the Committee hopes that cooperation and assistance under the Convention continues to flourish and contribute to the progress towards the objectives set out in the Maputo Action Plan.