

**Norwegian statement on Article 5**  
**Standing Committee on Mine Clearance**  
**Tuesday 22 June 2011**

Thank you Mr Chair,

Removing mines from the ground is one of the most tangible results of the implementation of the Mine Ban Convention, and it is the yardstick with which our common success will be measured by the rest of the world. As new and improved methods are increasingly employed, more areas are released, but progress is still not as good as it could be.

A decade ago humanitarian mine clearance represented a significant technical challenge, and the focus of the discussion was on new technologies to detect mines in the ground. Now this challenge has changed character substantially. Identifying mined areas accurately, and detecting the mines is in principle no longer a technical problem. The humanitarian mine clearance community has the knowledge and the means to do this – almost everywhere. The challenge today is mostly organisational and often a question of political priorities, namely – how to ensure that the right knowledge and methods are being used where they are needed, and in the process secure that the available resources are used in the most effective and efficient manner.

It is a concern to us that we still know too little about the global scope of the landmine problem. To quote Landmine Monitor from last year: “More than a decade after the Mine Ban Treaty entered into force, a reliable determination of the size of the global landmine problem still does not exist.” In our view, after 10-15 years of mine action when large amounts of resources have been provided to both surveying and clearance, it is puzzling that no global map exists that presents at least a rough idea of the global mine problem. Such a map, accessible on the internet and updated as progress is made, would have been very helpful.

We know that earlier surveys and assessments have overstated the problem. We appreciate that there never will be that one survey method providing a full picture of the actual remaining mined area, and that we must understand surveying as a continuous activity providing a gradually more informed picture until completion of Article 5 obligations is achieved. Still we have the feeling that too little is done to implement Action 14 of the Cartagena Action Plan, “to identify the precise perimeters and locations of mined and suspected mined areas”.

There is obviously a resource side to this, and we recognise the obligations under Article 6 to provide support for mine clearance. But in our view, equally important obstacles to effective implementation of Article 5 seem to be a reluctance to use updated, recommended and proven methods available to tackle the mine problem,

as well as a lack of real political commitment to address the mine problem in a serious manner. National ownership using the best available methods is the key to solving the mine problem - and national leadership is a precondition for that.

Mr Chair,

In these meetings we have for many years discussed and referred to the crucial role of the national authorities, the UN and the NGOs in implementing article 5. In this we have paid little attention to a significant actor in many mine-affected states – the private sector. Commercial actors in many areas represent a major share of mine clearance capacity, and their role should be both recognised and reviewed in this forum. Questions we believe would be fruitful to discuss include the relationship between private sector, states, the UN and NGOs, their various responsibilities and liabilities, the methods and standards the different actors use, and how they see their own role in contributing to Article 5 implementation. If the private sector represents an important resource in mine clearance then we should engage them with a view to maximising their positive impact as well as making certain that there are no negative implications of their efforts.

Finally, we would like to thank Germany for the information provided just now on their discovery of a previously unknown suspected hazardous area, and we would like to commend Germany for their transparent and timely presentation to both the States Parties of the Mine Ban Convention and to other partners present here in the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance today.

This is indeed an interesting situation for the Convention as this would seem to be the first time that a previously unknown mine contaminated area has been discovered and reported by a State that originally did not believe that it had obligations under Article 5 of the Mine Ban Convention. In our view, the President of the 10<sup>th</sup> MSP should consider carefully the implications for the Convention and initiate a discussion with Germany and others on how the Mine Ban Convention community should best respond to such a situation.

Germany has assured us that they will work to get a complete overview of the contamination as soon as possible, and that they will keep the States Parties informed and updated on their work. In addition, they have assured us that civilians are effectively excluded from the area. We look forward to hearing about Germany's progress both in surveying and in clearing the area.

Again, we thank Germany for their detailed presentation.

Thank you.

