

Norwegian statement on residual ERW contamination
Standing Committee on Mine Clearance
June 2011

Check against delivery

Thank you chair

And thanks to Carl for a very substantial and interesting presentation, and to ICBL for expanding the issue and identifying some of the critical questions this problematique entails.

It is timely that we start to discuss in this forum on how we address situations of contamination from ERW of all kinds after completion of Article 5 obligations. We know that most countries that have undergone armed conflict will have a multifaceted ERW problem even after all known mined areas are cleared. We also know that this will remain a long-time problem of decades rather than years. To illustrate, last week Norwegian defence issued a warning to the public against lighting campfires in a popular recreational area in the north of Norway due to the presence of subsurface ERW, dating back to the 1940 – 1945 conflict.

Addressing this residual problem constitute a different challenge than implementing article 5. While national mine action capacities built up to implement article 5 may be a valuable asset in the long-term work to respond to residual ERW contamination, these capacities need to be re-calibrated to address the specific actual problem, and integrated into relevant national structures in a financially sustainable manner.

Action 40 of the Cartagena Action Plan encourage states in a position to do so to support national capacities to deal with the residual problem. We believe that this is an issue we should address both in this standing committee as well as in the new committee on resources, cooperation and assistance.

We also recognise that these issues may lead to important and interesting questions regarding reporting and compliance after finalising article 5 and on how this community should respond to those questions in a coherent and relevant manner. We would welcome these discussions in this forum.

Thank you