

Meeting of the Standing Committees on the General Status and Operation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

GENEVA, 27 MAY 2013

### **Statement on Transparency and Exchange of Information**

**By BELGIUM, in its capacity of Coordinator of the Article 7 Contact Group**

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the 12 MSP, last December, Belgium proposed a roadmap for a better reporting and exchange of information. This roadmap contains concrete objectives, actions and deadlines to enhance the exchange of information about the implementation of the Convention. It is a comprehensive approach with objectives for increasing both the quantitative as qualitative aspects of the obligation on reporting as foreseen in Article 7. This roadmap should lead to an overall evaluation of the reporting mechanism at the 3rd Review Conference in Maputo, next year.

We also stated in the paper that we would lead the process in a transparent way. That's why, Co-chair, I would like to give a state of play during my intervention.

On the qualitative side of the document, we established some clear objectives. Let me remind you:

- having all initial reports submitted for the 3rd Review Conference. Actually we have 2 Initial Reports due: Tuvalu and Equatorial Guinea. We urge those 2 SP to submit their Report without any delay. We are particularly concerned about Equatorial Guinea which is already more than a decade late with the submission. Despite all demarches from the ISU as well as Civil Society, no results have been booked up to now.

- raising the reporting rate with focus on States Parties with implementation obligations with the ultimate objective to reach 100 %. Dear friends, the situation is dramatic: after the deadline of 30 April, only 40 %, I repeat and I say again: only 40 % of the States Parties submitted their annual Article 7 report. This is the lowest rate ever registered since the EIF of the Convention. No need to say that this is not only very disappointing, but this also raises a lot of concerns. Reporting is a legal obligation. Full stop. Not complying with this obligation is a clear breach to the Convention and all States Parties should be well aware of that. It might be appropriate, certainly when looking to this year's reporting rate, to think about how to handle with this non-compliance. Although the Convention and its implementation are based on solidarity, cooperation and confidence, States Parties should not forget that there are obligations to fulfill and reporting is one of them.

We fully understand that reporting is sometimes a burden for SP with limited resources. That is the reason why some actions are foreseen to assist those SP in fulfilling their reporting obligation. One of the actions is to offer to those SP without implementation obligations a simplified notification of "no updates to report" allowing them to comply with Article 7 at the lowest effort. A draft note verbal is annexed to the Roadmap and it is my intention to discuss this draft during the Article 7 Contact Group from tomorrow, where all interested SP and stakeholders are invited. I particularly invite those SP who are encountering difficulties by submitting their reports.

I also want to mention that assistance can be provided. And at least in this field there is a positive evolution: more SP are asking for assistance be it at the ISU, UN or civil society. We strongly encourage SP to take profit of this possibility.

Other actions are foreseen in the field of enhancing the quality of the submitted reports. The roadmap mentions a three pillar approach: raising awareness, providing tools and actualizing the reporting formats.

For the first point, raising awareness on the importance of reporting as a tool and as an opportunity, we will give a presentation on reporting on Article 5 during the Standing Committee of Article 5. I'd like to thank the co-chairs for giving me this opportunity. It is our believe that by showing the practical use of reporting we can encourage SP to provide more accurate information. We have chosen to start this initiative with Article 5 because the submission of the reports for this Article is sometimes inconsistent and new evolutions in the field of IMAS could make reporting on that easier.

During the Contact Group, we have also the intention to engage discussions on actualizing the Vertic Reporting guide and on drafting more detailed guides for reporting on Art 5 and Victim Assistance. We hope to be able to present those guides at the 3rd RC.

Finally, the roadmap also contains 2 new draft reporting forms, on Victim Assistance and on Cooperation & Assistance. We'd like to have exchange of views on these drafts and we are looking for contributions from all stakeholders to make these forms as efficient as possible. Bearing in mind that a form will always have its shortfalls, but that we have to find a balance: a form as detailed as possible avoiding at the same time to overload it.

Mister Co-Chair,

Dear friends,

that's where it stands concerning the implementation of the "Roadmap for a better exchange of information. The actions are ongoing and we hope that they will have the expected impact.

Of course, we cannot succeed without the help of all stakeholders. These actions aim to make life easier for the States Parties, so your inputs are of great importance for reaching these objectives.

We are looking forward to hearing from the States Parties what they think about it.

Facing the lowest reporting rate ever, doesn't make me happy. Those who know me know that I have a certain sense of humor. But today, there is no place for humor. From a personal point of view, I am sad and at the same time even more motivated.

Sad, because despite all efforts, we still haven't succeeded to convince all SP of the importance of reporting for the full implementation of the convention and because we haven't found the key yet to try to resolve this failure.

More motivated, because I believe that we can improve the exchange of information, but it takes goodwill, common sense and perseverance. I invite all States Parties and stakeholders to participate in this process.

M. Co-chair,

the situation in the field of Article 7 reporting reflects very well the challenges we face in general within the Convention. The progress of the implementation of the Convention can be considered as a success.

But, as other delegations mentioned earlier this morning, the job is not done. And as long as the job is not done, we need complete, accurate and timely reporting. This will be the last obligation lasting at the end of the ride.

The work program of the meetings of the Standing Committees gives the opportunity to the States parties to give an update on the progress of the implementations of the Convention in their country. While we welcome the information received during these meetings, we would welcome even more to read these updates in the annual Article 7 reports.

Finally, once again, I urge all States Parties to fulfill their Article 7 obligations and to submit their report without delay.

Thank you M. Co-Chair.