

Standing Committee on the General Status of the Convention

Meeting Report

23 / 27 April 2007

I. Introduction

Pursuant to the decisions of the 2004 First Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the 2006 Seventh Meeting of the States Parties (7MSP), the meeting of the Standing Committee was convened in Geneva by its Co-Chairs, Mr. Marcelo Valle Fonrouge of Argentina and Mr. Andrea Romussi of Italy, with the assistance of their Co-Rapporteurs, Ambassador Philip R. Owade of Kenya (who unfortunately was unable to attend the meeting) and Mr. Albrecht von Wittke of Germany.

The Co-Chairs informed the Standing Committee that they had prepared a programme for the meeting that covered four areas of work: (i) an overall assessment of the status of the pursuit of the Convention's core aims; (ii) discussions on matters of cross-cutting interest to all Standing Committees; (iii) ongoing consideration of the implementation of various articles of the Convention which have traditionally been discussed by this Standing Committee; and, (iv) updates on the work of various implementation mechanisms.

In addition, the Co-Chairs indicated that, in keeping with established practice, they would undertake the task of consulting with a view to identifying a list of nominees to serve as Co-Rapporteurs, keeping in mind principles like ensuring a regional balance, a balance between mine-affected and other State Parties, and a balance between the need for rotation and the need for continuity. In this regard, the Co-Chairs asked interested States Parties to express their interest in writing to one of the Co-Chairs as soon as possible in order that they could develop a list of prospective Co-Rapporteurs for presentation to the States Parties in coming months.

The Co-Chairs also observed that the meetings of the Standing Committees were taking place exactly half way between the Convention's First and Second Review Conferences, that the First Review Conference created the expectation that progress will indeed have been made by the end of 2009 and, that at this period – half-way between Review Conferences, States Parties should redouble their efforts to apply the Nairobi Action Plan.

II. General status of implementation

Ambassador Caroline Millar of Australia, **President of the 7MSP**, provided an overview of the general status of implementation and universalization. Highlights of Ambassador Millar's report included the following:

- *Universalization*: Since the 7MSP, two States – Montenegro and Indonesia have completed their ratification or accession processes, taking the number of States Parties to 153. To further promote universalization, Australia had implemented its "President's Action Plan to Universalize and Implement the Convention" through a number of different actions, including tabling an UNGA 1st Committee resolution on the implementation and univertzalisation of the Convention which gained 157 votes in favour.

- *Stockpile destruction:* At the end of the 7MSP there were 139 States Parties that did not hold stocks of anti-personnel mines, either because they never did or because they have completed their destruction programmes. As of 23 April 2007, the number had been increased to 141. Two States Parties – Afghanistan and Cyprus - had stockpile destruction deadlines later in 2007.
- *Mine clearance:* At the end of the 7MSP 45 States Parties had indicated that they were still in the process of fulfilling their obligations under Article 5 to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas. Significant progress had been made since then. Ambassador Millar underlined that the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies will also report on the application of the Article 5 extension request process and that the Co-Chairs of that Standing Committee had elaborated a calendar in this respect.
- *Victim assistance:* Ambassador Millar reminded States Parties of the strategic approach agreed in Nairobi, that the care, rehabilitation and reintegration of survivors must be seen in the broader contexts related to development, disability and human rights and in this regard welcomed the recent adoption and signature of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. There was a need to ensure that existing health care, rehabilitation, legislative and other frameworks were adequate to meet the needs of all citizens including landmine victims.
- *Other matters:* Ambassador Millar, among other things, pointed to the fact that only 50 percent of States Parties had adopted legislation to prevent and suppress prohibited activities in accordance with Article 9 of the Convention. She also relayed her concern about a report by the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia that referred to the alleged transfer of landmines into Somalia by three States Parties to the Convention and by one State not party. Her letter to the Chair of the Monitoring Group asking for further information had remained unanswered so far.

III. Status of universalization

Canada, the Coordinator of the Universalization Contact Group, expressed satisfaction that with the ratification by Indonesia 153 States – or 78 percent of all States – had ratified or acceded to the Convention. Of the 122 countries which signed the Convention in 1997, only two - the Marshall Islands and Poland - had not yet ratified the Convention. Canada underlined the importance of a wide range of actors offering their meaningful contributions to collective universalization efforts and cited several examples of such efforts.

Indonesia provided an update, reporting that it deposited its instrument of ratification on 16 February 2007. Indonesia also provided information on its preparation of the initial transparency report, which will include information on stockpiles and plans for their destruction, as Indonesia is neither a mine affected country nor has it produced AP mines. Indonesia also would welcome assistance and expertise from other States Parties in implementing the Convention.

In addition, a number of States not parties shared their views on the Convention:

- **Nepal** stated that a number of customary legal provisions with regard to humanitarian law in Nepal banned inhumane practices of explosion in wartime or peace and underlined its commitment towards human rights. In addition, the production, use, sale, transfer,

transaction, import and possession of any kind of explosives were punishable by law in Nepal. Nepal pointed to the fact that in the post-conflict situation in the country after the November 2006 conclusion of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the government and Maoists, national concern would turn to the safe removal of mines, IEDs, UXOs and other explosive devices. Notable work in the area of humanitarian demining could be recorded.

- **Palau**, although not a State party yet, underlined its commitment to the Convention and its terms and indicated its intention to accede to the Convention in the near future. Palau also urged members of the Pacific Islands Forum, which are not yet parties to the Convention, to accede to it at the earliest possible time.
- **Mongolia** reiterated that it is proceeding on a step-by-step basis towards accession to the Convention, currently focussing on the preparation of a voluntary Article 7 Report. Mongolia also underlined its support for the universalization of the Convention.
- **Georgia** expressed general support for efforts towards a world free of anti-personnel mines and recalled that since 1996 it had voted in favour of every UNGA resolution on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines. It indicated that it had not produced, exported or imported anti-personnel mines since 1991 and that in 1996 it declared a moratorium on the production and transfer of anti-personnel mines. However it had chosen not to accede to the Convention on the basis of the existence of territories uncontrolled by the central authorities and hence incapability to fulfil the obligations of the Convention. Georgia further reported the existence of anti-personnel mines in areas under its control or jurisdiction and that it required assistance in their removal.
- **Poland**, a signatory State, indicated that its position with respect to the Convention remained unchanged, endorsing the ideals of the Convention and being fully committed to it. Every possible effort to ratify the Convention as soon as possible would be undertaken by Poland. Poland reported on its decade-long plan aimed at the gradual but systematic reduction of AP mine stocks, eliminating over 100,000 mines annually and that it already partially implements the Convention by not producing, exporting or using AP mines in military operations. Since 2003 Poland has submitted voluntary Article 7 Reports and is involved in mine action projects worldwide.

As well, the following States Parties and organizations provided updates on their universalization efforts:

- The **ICBL** deplored only little progress in universalization since the 7MSP and urged the two remaining signatories, Poland and the Marshall Islands, to ratify the Convention. The ICBL also urged Finland to join the Convention and reported on its universalization activities on the Middle East in the run up to the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties (8MSP) and in Southeast Asia and Central Asia. The ICBL called for support for an annual submission of the UN Resolution on the Convention as a valuable advocacy tool and reminded participants that in 2006 18 States not party to the Convention voted in favour of the resolution. The ICBL also underlined the need to engage armed non-State armed groups which are using, producing and / or stockpiling mines and pointed to the recent example of three rebel groups active in Burma renouncing the use of landmines.
- The **United Nations** Mine Action Team (UNMAT) reminded participants of the second United Nations International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action,

held on 4 April 2007, and the events related to that day. The UN Secretary General on that occasion had encouraged all States that had not already done so to accede to the Convention, as well as to Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The UNMAT also reported on a half day treaty workshop in the margins of the 10th International Meeting of Mine Action Programme directors and UN advisors.

- **Sudan** reiterated that it had acceded to the Convention while war was still ongoing, and that the implementation of the Convention was one of the top priorities for the new unity government. Sudan reported on progress in mine and UXO clearance. Sudan underlined its position that the Convention was not only a matter for States, but that a generalized approach was needed to involve anybody who might possibly use AP mines and in this respect called for openness towards organisations like Geneva Call in their efforts to engage armed non-State actors.
- **Switzerland** underlined that univerzalisation of the Convention remained one of its primary objectives and that in the context of achieving universal compliance with its norms, Switzerland continued to support the activities by Geneva Call and welcomed their recent success. Switzerland promotes reflections on States' roles to make armed non-State actors end the use of AP mines. Switzerland pointed to its side event on this topic at the 7MSP and will further report at the 8MSP.
- **Turkey** expressed its strong commitment to the Convention and its univerzalisation, in particular with respect to its neighbours. Turkey underlined its views with respect to armed non-State actors, noting that the engagement of armed non-State actors should be undertaken on a case by case basis and only when the concerned State Party is informed and its consent received for engagement.
- The **ICRC** stated its understanding of univerzalisation as also implying the observance of the Convention's norms by armed non-State actors and pointed to the fact that Asia and the Middle East are regions underrepresented in the list of States Parties to the Convention. The ICRC noted that it is organising a meeting in June 2007 together with Kuwait for the States of the Gulf Cooperation Council as well as a meeting in September 2007 in Tunis for the Magreb States.
- **Australia** reported that its focus is to promote universalization in the Asia-Pacific region, also by supporting mine action in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Sri Lanka. Mine action is also supported elsewhere, i.e. in Sudan, Lebanon, Afghanistan and other countries.

IV. Resource mobilisation

Norway, the Coordinator of the Resource Mobilization Contact Group, provided an update on efforts made with respect to resource mobilization and reminded delegates that the deadlines for mine clearance are moving closer for several States Parties. Norway also announced a lunchtime meeting of the Resource Mobilization Contact Group focussing on the kind of data needed to improve allocation of resources for mine action.

- The **ICBL** referred to the European Commission's (EC's) mainstreaming of mine action funding into geographic and development budgetary lines managed by the EC and expressed concern over a possible loss of substantial funds due to the decentralisation process and due to national governments of mine affected countries and EC

representatives not setting the right priorities with regard to mine action in national development plans funded by the EC.

- The **European Commission** underlined the European Union and European Commission's continuing strong support for mine action – clearly expressed by EU assistance for mine action of some €214 million in 2005, of which €57 million came from the EU budget administered by the European Commission, the remainder from bilateral contributions by EU Member States. The EC described developments that led to the mainstreaming of mine action into the four new decentralised EU Financial Instruments, aiming at better aligning policies with funding instruments. Practically this mainstreaming and decentralization implied that the interlocutors of States seeking EU assistance for mine action now are the EC delegations abroad and that the EU's partners would now to a very large extent decide on the degree of importance that mine action will be given within the EU's assistance funding for their country.
- The **UN Mine Action Team** reported on its efforts to ensure better use of available funds for mine action, e.g. by improving risk management and by instituting a web-based method for developing the Portfolio of Mine Action Projects. The UN is also advising States on mainstreaming mine action into multi-sectoral planning and budgeting to ensure the highest socio-economic impact of mine action activities, e.g. in Afghanistan. The UN is also encouraging national ownership of mine action activities and cited examples of Burundi and Yemen.
- **Thailand** underlined the need for political commitment and availability of resources to reach the Convention's aim of the total elimination of AP mines, pointing to the fact that most affected States are developing States that have competing needs.
- **Canada** reported on the expected and required phasing out of the thematic Canadian Landmine Fund and the integration of mine action into regular assistance programs. Through this Canada's disbursement of mine action funds amounted to CDN\$ 34 million in the last financial year.

V. Update on Article 7 Reporting

Belgium, the Coordinator of the Article 7 Contact Group, reported on efforts to promote timely reporting in accordance with the Article. Highlights included that three new initial reports had been provided by Brunei Darussalam, Guyana and Ukraine, that eight States Parties remain late in providing an initial transparency report, that the overall reporting rate for 2006 stood at roughly 70 percent with 46 States Parties not having supplied a 2006 annual report. (Note: The deadline for 2007 only elapsed on 30 April 2007, i.e. after the meeting). Belgium reminded participants of the possibility to use the simplified form in case no new developments were to be reported. It was noted that two States not parties volunteered all (Poland) or some (Morocco) of the information required of States Parties under Article 7. It was also noted that ongoing transparency reporting by States Parties was not only an obligation under the Convention, but also served as a basis to assess needs and the possibility for cooperation and assistance, in particular where stockpiles need to be destroyed, mine fields need to be cleared, victims have to be assisted or national legislation has to be drawn up and finally for States Parties that retain mines in accordance with Art. 3.

The Director of the Geneva Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (**UNODA**), Mr. Tim Caughley, emphasized that the Geneva Branch of the UNODA had been

designated to receive Article 7 Transparency Reports on behalf of the Convention's Depository, the UN Secretary General, and that the reporting period was the calendar year. The UNODA reported that until 23 April 2007, 36 national reports had been received by UNODA.

The **ICBL** presented its views on progress and shortcomings in annual reporting, including its desire that there be more information on anti-vehicle mines with sensitive fuzes and anti-handling devices, foreign stockpiles, claymore mines, ozm-72 mines, and mines discovered after official stockpile destruction programs have ended.

VI. Updates on Article 3

The **Co-Chairs** recalled that the Nairobi Action Plan notes that “transparency and the open exchange of information have been essential pillars on which the Convention’s practices, procedures and tradition of partnership have been built,” and, that “the States Parties recognize that transparency and effective information exchange will be equally crucial to fulfilling their obligations during the period 2005-2009.” In addition, the Co-Chairs recalled that to this end, the States Parties agreed to a number of actions, including that “all States Parties will (...) in situations where States Parties have retained mines in accordance with the exceptions in Article 3, provide information on the plans requiring the retention of mines for the development of and training in mine detection, mine clearance, or mine destruction techniques and report on the actual use of retained mines and the results of such use.” As well, the Co-Chairs noted that to assist States Parties in applying Action #54 of the Nairobi Action Plan, the States Parties at the Sixth Meeting of the States Parties (6MSP) agreed to amend the Article 7 reporting format, thus creating a means for States Parties to share information in addition to what is minimally required on mines retained in accordance with Article 3. At the 7MSP, it was reported that 9 States Parties made use of this amended format in 2006 and that 17 States Parties volunteered information during the Intersessional Work Programme.

In the context of discussions on Article 3, the following provided updates or shared views:

- **Chile** announced that in 2006 it had destroyed almost 1,300 mines retained under Article 3 because it determined that they were not needed for training purposes and that together with mines destroyed in training this had brought down the number of mines retained to 4,484.
- **Croatia** announced that 175 mines were planned to be destroyed in 2007 during the course of testing of mine clearance equipment, while in 2006 57 AP mines had been used for this purpose, bringing the number of retained mines in stock down to 6,179.
- **Argentina** underscored the importance of the Article 7 reporting format’s amended Form D as an important step in the context of Action #54 of the Nairobi Action Plan. Argentina reported that it had destroyed 126 retained AP mines, now had a stockpile of 1,470 mines under Article 3 and had used Form D to provide additional information on the use of these mines. Argentina urged other States to also submit their information using the Article 7 reporting format’s amended Form D.
- The **ICBL** expressed the view that there was widespread abuse of the exception in Article 3, allowing retention of AP mines for training and development. According to the ICBL, it appears that many States Parties are retaining more antipersonnel mines than “absolutely necessary”, many are not using mines retained under Article 3 for the permitted purposes

and that it is time to think about this as a compliance issue, and not just a reporting or transparency issue. The ICBL noted that 68 States Parties retain a combined number of over 232,000 AP mines under Article 3. Only one State Party had provided information under the Article 7 reporting format's amended Form D in 2006. The ICBL indicated it continued to question the need for live AP mines for training and called on States Parties to continue to evaluate the necessity for this exception, especially for those States Parties that have not used mines for permitted purposes in prior years. The ICBL urged all States Parties that retain mines under Article 3 to adopt a set of best practices in order to ensure that the exception granted for retaining antipersonnel mines is not being misused.

- The **ICRC** supported the points raised by ICBL and advocated a conservative interpretation of the term “minimum number absolutely necessary for training and research purposes”. Given that so far no common understanding on “minimum number” had been reached since the Nairobi Review Conference and that only a very small number of States Parties used the voluntary expanded format for form D for reporting under Article 7, and if progress was not made at the 8MSP, the ICRC would strongly urge States Parties to develop a normative understanding on Article 3 by the next Review Conference.
- **Kenya** reported it had retained 3,000 AP mines under Article 3 after destroying its AP mine stockpiles in 2002. After consuming 540 AP mines for purposes foreseen under Article 3, it now retains 2,460 AP mines, used for training in detection, clearance and destruction, e.g. for training of students from 62 countries
- **Canada** underlined its commitment to Action #54 of the Nairobi Action Plan and reported that it had retained the right to keep up to 2,000 anti-personnel mines for permitted purposes and gave detailed information on the quantity and types as well as the purposes of retaining the mines. Canada in 2006-07 consumed 51 AP mines, leaving a total of 1,941 mines currently retained.
- **Japan** informed that the mines retained by it have been used for the purpose of training in mine detection and mine clearance as well as for research in corresponding equipment. In 2007-08 mines will be used for training in mine detection and mine clearance through actual mine destruction exercises.
- **Mauritania** reported that out of 728 retained anti-personnel mines it had transferred 85 mines. After intensive debate between Parliament and the Military on retained mines, the remaining 643 mines will be employed for training purposes until the desired expertise is reached, the last mines remaining will then be eliminated.
- **Turkey** repeated indications from its 2005 report that the number of mines retained had dropped to 15,150. These mines had been retained for training in mine detection, mine clearance and mine destruction along with the development of new techniques. Turkey underlined the need to retain this number due to the large size and different types of mine action units in the Turkish Armed Forces. It advocated keeping the wording of Article 3 unchanged in recognition of differing needs by different States Parties.

VII. Updates on Article 9

The Co-Chairs recalled that the Nairobi Action Plan notes that “primary responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Convention rests with each State Party” and that Article 9 accordingly requires each party to take “all appropriate legal, administrative and other

measures, including the imposition of penal sanctions, to prevent and suppress prohibited activities by persons or on territory under its jurisdiction and control.” They noted that the Geneva Progress Report recorded that 74 States that have ratified or acceded to the Convention “have not yet reported having adopted legislation in the context of Article 9 obligations or that they consider existing laws to be sufficient.” It was also important to report other measures mentioned in Article 9 to prevent and suppress prohibited activities, including the systematic dissemination of information regarding the Convention’s prohibitions to their armed forces, the development of armed forces training bulletins, the distribution of the text of the Convention in military academies and directives issued to police forces. To assist States Parties in providing information on administrative and other measures taken in accordance with Article 9, the Co-Chairs had developed a questionnaire for States Parties.

At the request of the Co-Chairs, the ICRC elaborated on the requirements set out in Article 9 and proposed a checklist for its implementation. The ICRC also provided an update on the status of implementation of Article 9, indicating that 52 States Parties (out of 153) have reported having adopted legislation to implement the Convention (new in 2007: Senegal, Chad), 36 States Parties have reported being in the process of adopting legislation (new: Bolivia, Brunei, Jordan, Madagascar, Peru, Saint Lucia), 25 States Parties have reported that they consider existing laws to be sufficient to give effect to the Convention (new: Greece), and 5 States Parties have reported that they are assessing whether to adopt legislation, and that there are 31 States Parties for which information is unknown or unclear (new: Bhutan). Four (4) new States Parties have not yet reported.

Several States, as requested by the Co-Chairs, provided information and updates on their legal, administrative and other measures taken in accordance with Art. 9:

- **Argentina** reported that the text of the Convention had been translated to Spanish on the occasion of its ratification by Argentina and subsequently distributed to all official bodies, including those of the armed forces. In addition the norms of the Convention have been incorporated in the study programs of Military Training Academies and the Military Doctrine through the Regulations on Mines in the Argentinean Armed Forces. Argentina has further disseminated Information on the Convention through articles and editorials in high circulation publications for the Army and the Navy as well as lectures. Finally, information was provided on penal code sanctions to be applied to the activities prohibited by the Convention (art. 189bis).
- **Germany** reported on its measures for implementation of the Convention and fulfilment of Article 9 obligations through a mix of legislative measures: A stand-alone bill relating to AP mines provides for fact-finding missions under the Convention and the necessary legal arrangements. By amending its existing “War Weapons Control Act” Germany introduced provisions relating to the prohibition of AP mines and penal provisions as well as regulations on acts committed in contravention of the Convention outside the area of application of Germany’s penal Code. As Germany had destroyed all its AP mine stockpiles before entry into force of the Convention, Military Doctrine already then foresaw only the use of mines other than anti-personnel mines and manuals, training, techniques and procedures for operations had already been adapted before 1999. In the context of international military operations the corresponding operation plan is only agreed by Germany if all obligations under the Conventions are fully taken into account.
- **Chile** reported that its bill on national implementation measures would enter into force this year. Currently sufficient legislation is in place, a monitoring and supervisory body

under law has been established under Ministry of Defence and penal sanctions are handed down in case of infringements. To date, no legal problems have arisen, all measures could be taken under administrative authority without the need to have a parliamentary process to update national legislation. In addition to these measures a Bill on National Measures on Humanitarian Demining has established legal norms to assist mine victims in Chile. Also the military doctrine has been adapted, reaching all Armed Land Forces.

- The **Philippines** reported that the legislation implementing the Convention remained pending in the Philippine Congress and that after elections in May 2007 a renewed effort would be undertaken. Meanwhile the Army had removed AP mines from their arsenal and stopped their use, while armed non-State actors continue to use AP mines. The Philippines thanked the Philippine Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Geneva Call for their efforts to have three such groups signed the Geneva Call's "Deed of Commitment" banning the use of AP mines.
- **Tanzania** reported that initial steps had been undertaken with the aim of developing mine action legislation in Tanzania that is going to be considered by Parliament this year.
- The **Democratic Republic of the Congo** reported that its implementation legislation, although in an advanced stage of preparation, had so far not had the chance to be adopted due to the difficult internal transition situation in the country, but had again been submitted to the new government for adoption.
- **San Marino** reported (in writing) that it had never been involved in activities linked to AP mines and that adoption of domestic legislation incorporating the provisions of the convention was not excluded, but no specific date for a possible drafting of such legislation could be given.
- The **ICBL** deplored the lack of information concerning the implementation measures according to Article 9. The ICBL called on States Parties to provide a report on the application of relevant penal sanctions. The ICBL also reported that it had started a series of informal meetings to improve the information on this subject.

VIII. The practical implementation of the various other provisions of the Convention

The Co-Chairs recalled that Nairobi Action Plan indicates that the States Parties will "exchange views and share their experiences in a cooperative and informal manner on the practical implementation of the various provisions of the Convention, including Articles 1, 2 and 3, to continue to promote effective and consistent application of these provisions."

The following States Parties and organizations took advantage of the opportunity presented by the Co-Chairs to share such views and experiences:

- **Trinidad and Tobago** informed about a June 2006 workshop for CARICOM countries it organised with the support of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and Canada on all aspects of the Convention that had also highlighted the support available for fulfilling obligations under Articles 7 and 9 of the Convention.
- The **ICBL** voiced serious concern over several compliance issues that it saw as a very troubling indicator of the health of the Convention. These included the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia's allegations of AP mine transfers by Eritrea; Venezuela's declaration

(earlier during the 2007 Meetings of the Standing Committees) of gaining military use from emplaced mines around its naval bases in violation of Article 1 and possibly Article 5; the missed stockpile destruction deadline by Afghanistan and the threat of missing it by Belarus and Ukraine; the fact that four States Parties have not begun mine clearance work as required by Article 5, and, the abuse of the Article 3 exception by many States. The ICBL also called for operationalization of Article 8 and more cooperation among States Parties to ensure full compliance. The ICBL called for a common understanding on Article 1 (“prohibition on assistance”, especially in case of multinational joint operations with States not parties) to be developed before or at the Second Review Conference. On Article 2 the ICBL called for a common approach since the definition issue of what is understood to be an anti-personnel mine would not be dealt with in Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

- The ICRC spoke on Article 2, recalling its view that anti-vehicle mines that are equipped with sensitive fuses likely to be detonated by the presence of a person should be considered anti-personnel mines are prohibited by the Convention. The ICRC reported that 24 States Parties had expressed their support for this view while 6 had expressed differing opinions. The ICRC called on all States Parties to make their views known and to discuss the application of Article 2 in the meetings of the Convention. In addition the ICRC shared the ICBL’s concern regarding compliance issues and called for promptly addressing any compliance problem.
- **Moldova** reported that it had destroyed, in 2006, all its AP mines retained under Article 3 and reiterated that it had never produced or exported mines and that there were no minefields on territory under its control. In its 2007 transparency report Moldova was again not able to provide information on AP mines concerning the Transnistrian region of Moldova controlled by a separatist armed structure and where troops from the Russian Federation were present. Moldova called on the Russian Federation to provide all information about AP mines under Russian control on the territory of Moldova
- **Venezuela**, reacting to the ICBL’s statement, underlined its commitment to the spirit and the objectives of the Convention.
- The **Netherlands** echoed the ICRC’s call for the Convention’s meetings to discuss views on the Convention’s definitions (Article 2) as the topic was now off the CCW’s agenda.
- **Canada** said it shared concerns with regard to compliance, as would many States Parties, and asked to deal with such issues also on a bilateral basis
- **France** reported on the importance it attaches to universalisation, demining and assistance to the least developed countries affected by mines, especially in Africa. It indicated that as AP mines and other explosive remnants of war are frequently located in the same areas mine clearance activities could not be selective and called on States Parties who have not done so to adhere to CCW Amended Protocol II and Protocol V. Finally, France voiced its support and confidence in Geneva Call’s activities to promote the principles and norms of the Convention with armed non-State actors.

IX. Updates by the Contact Group Coordinators

The **Co-Chairs** recalled the indication of the *Nairobi Action Plan* that “all States Parties will (...) continue to utilize informal mechanisms such as the Contact Groups, which have

emerged to meet specific needs.” and gave the floor to Contact Group Coordinators to provide updates on their work during the meetings of the Standing Committees.

Canada, the Coordinator of the Universalization Contact Group, informed that the Parliament of Kuwait had passed an accession law and that two regional universalisation meetings had been held during the meetings of the Standing Committees (on the Middle East and North Africa, and, on Asia and the Pacific) and about the numerous universalisation activities by States Parties, international organizations and NGO’s that had been discussed. Canada highlighted the call by Jordan to engage States not parties in the Middle East at the highest level and to include the Convention as an agenda item during high level visits. It was noted that the in the Contact Group support was expressed for continuation of an annual UN General Assembly resolution on the Convention, noting its value as a universalisation tool. It was agreed, to ease the workload associated with the resolution, no need was seen to have a large number of co-sponsors, but to have the resolution co-sponsored by the States Parties represented in the Coordinating Committee. The Universalization Contact Group generally agreed that an achievable goal by the 9MSP, if not the 8MPS, would be 160 States Parties.

Norway, the Coordinator of the Resource Mobilization Contact Group, described the focus of the group’s work as “how can we get more effective mine action on the ground with the resources available”, especially against the background of shrinking external dedicated resources and Article 5 deadlines coming closer. The Contact Group had developed recommendations reflected in the 7MSP report. During meetings of the Standing Committees the Contact Group had focused on the tools to implement those recommendation, especially the requirement of adequate and sufficient information/data to take optimal decisions with regard to planning and prioritisation in mine action. To continue work on the issue, two regional seminars were announced (in Chile and Jordan).

Canada, the Coordinator of the Linking Mine Action and Development Contact Group, reported that the Group first met in the margins of the 7MSP and that its purpose was (a) to support States Parties in achieving the relevant 10 actions identified under the Nairobi Action Plan and (b) to support the inclusion of mine action and development in the OECD-DAC work programme for 2007-08. During the meetings of the Standing Committees the Contact Group had among others, heard a report on a dedicated GICHD project and from practitioners in the field on integrated approaches.

Belgium, the Coordinator of the Article 7 Contact Group, indicated that by 27 April 2007, 53 reports had been submitted, i.e. by 36 % of all States Parties, which represented a decrease in comparison with 2006. The Coordinator invited all States Parties with difficulties in reporting to address him. In addition, eight initial reports were still pending. The Coordinator asked all States Parties to assist the States concerned in the Convention’s spirit of partnership. The proposal for amending the reporting format’s Forms B and G was recommended for consideration at the 8MSP.

X. Preparations for the Seventh Meeting of the States Parties (7MSP)

A. Introduction:

The Co-Chairs recalled that at the 7MSP in Geneva, it was agreed that His Royal Highness Prince Mired of Jordan would be designated President of the 8MSP and that the 8MSP would be held in Jordan from 18 to 22 November 2007. In addition, they noted that it has been the tradition that the Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention

has served as a forum for views to be shared on proposed procedural matters concerning the next Meeting of the States Parties.

B. 8MSP officials and assisting personnel:

Before proceeding with discussion on these procedural matters the Co-Chairs informed the Standing Committee of the following:

- In keeping with tradition that when Meetings of the States Parties are held outside of Geneva the host country designates a Secretary-General to coordinate arrangements for the meeting's opening ceremonies and side events as well as other efforts in support of the Meeting. The Co-Chairs indicated that they had been informed that Mr. Ayman Al-Amery, Director of International Relations and Organizations at Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Jordan, had been designated Secretary-General of the 8MSP, subject to acceptance by the States Parties.
- In keeping with practice that has seen the States Parties request that the United Nations Secretary General appoint an Executive Secretary to provide and direct the staff required by the Meetings of the States Parties, the Co-Chairs indicated that they had made such a request to the UN Secretary General and that Mr. Tim Caughley, Director of the Geneva Branch of the UNODA, had been appointed Executive Secretary of the 8MSP.
- Regarding personnel that will support the States Parties' work in advance of and during 7MSP, the Co-Chairs reported that in keeping with past practice the President-Designate had forwarded to the Director of the GICHD a request that the Manager of the ISU serve as the President's Executive Coordinator in advance of and during the 8MSP and that the GICHD Director had accepted this request.

C. Draft procedural documents:

The **8MSP President-Designate, His Royal Highness Prince Mired of Jordan**, introduced a paper containing initial ideas for the 8MSP, a draft agenda and draft programme for the meeting. He highlighted that the meeting in Jordan 10 years after the adoption of the Convention and the first meeting in the Middle East presented three opportunities: to reinvigorate interest globally in the landmine problem, to increase interest in the Convention in the Middle East and to highlight the challenges faced by mine affected countries and ways to overcome these challenges.

The President-Designate noted that the proposed programme was be a hybrid of the programmes used at the 6MSP and 7MSP. As well, he indicated that the 8MSP should work towards welcoming a Dead Sea Progress Report, which would record progress made in the application of the Nairobi Action Plan since the 7MSP. The 8MSP should also conclude work on procedural aspects concerning the matter of Article 5 extension requests but in particular give due attention to actual implementation of Article 5.

Canada thanked Jordan for the excellent preparation of the meeting and appealed to all States Parties to follow its example and contribute to financing the 8MSP. It also announced a symposium to be held in Ottawa on 3 and 4 December 2007 to mark 10 years of the opening for signature of the Convention.

The **Netherlands** also indicated it was looking positively at a contribution to the meeting.

It was the sense of the Co-Chairs that the ideas proposed by Jordan, including the agenda and programme, are generally acceptable to the States Parties and could be considered for adoption by the States Parties at the beginning of the 8MSP.

The Co-Chairs introduced draft rules of procedure for the 8MSP, noting that they are identical to the rules of procedure that served the States Parties well at the 7MSP, which in turn were rules that were adapted from those used at every previous Meeting of the States Parties.

It was the Co-Chairs' sense that the draft rules prepared are generally acceptable to the States Parties for their consideration at the 8MSP.

The Co-Chairs recalled that Article 14 of the Convention states that "the costs of Meetings of the States Parties (...) shall be borne by the States Parties and States not parties to this Convention participating therein, in accordance with the UN scale of assessment adjusted accordingly." The 8MSP Executive Secretary introduced draft cost estimates for the 8MSP. It was the sense of the Co-Chairs that the cost estimates presented by the UNODA were generally acceptable to the States Parties for consideration for adoption at the 7MSP.

D. Organizational matters:

Ms. Lina Abu Nuwar, Head of International Relations for Jordan's National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation, provided an initial overview of organizational matters, noting that an opening ceremony will be held under the patronage of His Majesty King Abdullah II on the evening of 17 November, preceded by a cocktail reception hosted by Jordan. She further mentioned a field trip organized for participants to a touristic site cleared from mines in the morning of 17 November and the Hotel reservation deadline of 1 October 2007 and that a homepage <http://www.8mspjordan.org> should be online by mid July.

E. Decisions to be taken at the 8MSP

The Co-Chairs reminded participants of decisions that States Parties will have to take at the 8MSP: (a) new Co-Rapporteurs (10 States Parties had already made known their interest to become Co-Rapporteurs by 27 April 2007); (b) the date and location of the 9MSP; and, (c) the dates for meetings of the Standing Committees in 2008

XI. Matters pertaining to the general operations of the Convention

A. Coordinating Committee

Ambassador Caroline Millar of Australia, President of the 7MSP and **Chair of the Coordinating Committee** reported that the Committee had met four times since the 7MSP and that the next meeting would take place on 28 June where among other issues a first draft of the *Dead Sea Progress Report* would be discussed.

B. Implementation Support Unit (ISU)

Ambassador Stephan Nellen, Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), provided an update of activities undertaken by the ISU since the 7MSP to assist States Parties in the implementation of the Convention. He pointed in particular to the opening of the new AP Mine Ban Convention Documentation Centre on 26 April 2007,

the new look of GICHD publications and communication tools and the creation of a unique website for the Convention at www.apminebanconvention.org or at www.ottawaconvention.org. The satisfaction of States Parties with the ISU's work could also be measured by the record number of 24 States Parties contributing to the ISU Trust Fund in 2006. He finally pointed to the fact that the ISU's 2007 budget had to be increased to provide support for efforts concerning the Article 5 extension process by establishing a new position within the ISU. The **Co-Chairs** thanked Ambassador Nellen and the Manager of the ISU, Mr. Kerry Brinkert, for their invaluable support.

Mr. Guy Pollard of the **United Kingdom**, the **Coordinator of the Sponsorship Programme**, reported that the Programme's Donors' Group had sponsored a total of 56 delegates from 37 States for the April meetings, and that among them were 20 victim assistance specialists and 4 univerzalisation candidates. Mr. Pollard reported that since the Review Conference donations to the Programme had been in decline but that funds were still adequate to ensure a similar level of sponsorship for the 8MSP in Jordan. He also urged States Parties in a position to do so to contribute funding to the Programme..

Canada thanked the ISU and its Manager, Kerry Brinkert and announced Canadian contributions to both the ISU Trust Fund and to the Sponsorship Programme while **Norway** also thanked the ISU for its fantastic work and announced an invitation to an event for States Parties and civil society in Oslo on 18 September 2007 celebrating 10 years since the adoption of the Convention.

XI. Closing of the Meeting

The **Co-Chairs** closed the meeting by observing that only one third of the States Parties had to date submitted their annual reports while the deadline was only three days ahead on 30 April 2007.