

**Standing Committee on  
Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies**

**Meeting Report 25 - 26 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. Camilo Sanhueza of Chile and Ms. Merete Lundemo of Norway with the assistance of their Co-Rapporteurs, Mr. John MacBride of Canada and Mr. Diego Beleván Tamayo of Peru.

Based on relevant aspects of the *Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009*, the *2005 Zagreb Progress Report* and the *2006 Geneva Progress Report*, the Co-Chairs prepared a programme for the meeting that focused on the following matters: updates from the States Parties that had indicated that they were still in the process of fulfilling Article 5 obligations; update on the process related to requesting extensions; updates on cooperation and assistance; presentations on enhancing understanding of efficient and effective measures to implement Article 5; and other thematic matters including mine risk education and gender and mine action. With respect to the first matter, the Co-Chairs had, in advance of the meeting, distributed questionnaires to assist States Parties in structuring their presentations.

**II. Overview of the Status of Implementation of Article 5**

Ambassador Juan Martabit of Chile delivered the Co-Chairs' statement on the status of the implementation of Article 5. He highlighted the importance of this year as we now go into a new phase of the implementation of the Convention. Ambassador Martabit underlined the need to continue cooperating in the spirit of the Convention, and to keep a clear focus on fulfilling the commitment under Article 5, as we now begin the implementation of the extension process as agreed at the 7MSP. He underlined the importance of also basing this phase of Convention implementation on the principles of clarity, transparency and predictability. He further reminded participants that those States Parties having a deadline for clearing mines in 2009, who need an extension, should submit such requests at the latest by March 2008. Those States Parties that require an extension may seek assistance in preparing such requests. The process for preparing and examining extension requests will raise additional costs which, in the opinion of the co-chairs, should be shared by all States Parties.

**III. Discussion**

1. Update on Implementation Plans and Progress

The Co-Chairs opened this session by identifying that to date some States Parties had provided little information as to the status of implementation and that more clarity is needed. To that end the Co-Chairs had distributed a questionnaire for States Parties in the process of fulfilling Article 5 obligations to use during the course of this meeting. The floor was then opened for States Parties to provide updates beginning with those with deadlines in 2009. Eighteen States Parties with deadlines in 2009, six in 2010, four in 2011 and twelve in 2012 provided updates. Of the forty States Parties that made presentations to the Standing

Committee, ten advised that they will complete their Article 5 obligations in time; three advised that they expected to but could not confirm; eight indicated they would be seeking an extension; and nineteen States Parties did not specify a completion date or indicate intent with regard to extensions.

*See Annex 1 for a summary of national interventions.*

Interventions were made in response to the presentations by States Parties by the ICBL, Venezuela, Djibouti and the ICRC.

*See Annex 2 for a summary of comments relating to national interventions.*

The Co-Chairs thanked the States Parties and other participants for their contributions in reporting progress in achieving the Convention's Article 5 obligations and noted the level of transparency in the presentations. They advised that the Co-Chairs would work closely with States Parties between the Intersessional Meetings and the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties (8MSP) while also noting, with concern, that some States Parties had not yet initiated the work. The Co-Chairs also remarked that the close cooperation between former opposing factions was truly a confidence building measure.

*See Annex 3 for Final Observations of the Co-Chairs on the Statements Regarding Updating of Information on the Implementation of Article 5*

## 2. Update on the Process Related to Requesting Extensions

The Co-Chairs opened discussion on this issue by reminding the meeting that the process had been agreed by States Parties at the 7MSP including a decision to encourage States Parties seeking extensions to do so nine months before the Meeting of States Parties or Review Conference that would consider such a request. Assuming that Ninth Meeting of the States Parties (9MSP) is held in December 2008, requests should be submitted no later than March 2008. With regard to the voluntary template for extension requests, the Co-Chairs had been advised by Canada that at its last meeting on this issue, there appeared to be broad support for the voluntary template as amended. Consequently the Co-Chairs recommended States Parties to make use of the template when preparing extension requests. The Co-Chairs invited States Parties in the process of preparing extension requests to inform the meeting of the status of their work. Peru, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina provided updates to the Standing Committee.

The Manager of the Implementation Support Unit provided an update on the status of his efforts to support individual States Parties in the preparations of the extension requests. He presented eight preliminary observations with regard to the preparation of extension requests. Specifically: the template has proven to be a useful tool; once information has been assembled it is possible to adopt it to meet individual circumstances; while the template could be the actual request, it may be advisable to submit a narrative with relevant tables from the template attached; ambiguity in terminology can be minimized by defining terms and using the language of the Convention; there is a need to clarify the benchmarks used for measuring progress; as requests could be lengthy it is important that they contain only information related to Article 5 implementation; the requests themselves can be used to clarify any discrepancies from previous Article 7 reports; and in 2008 and 2009, when many requests might be considered, formal meetings should occur late in the year to provide more time to prepare.

The ICBL reminded States Parties that the extension provision is not an excuse to fail to meet Article 5 obligations. The ICBL has developed its recommended criteria for judging extension requests and is prepared to assist States Parties in the preparation of these requests and in the analysis.

### 3. Update on Assistance and Cooperation

The following States Parties and organizations made statements on cooperation and assistance: Norway, Japan, France, United Kingdom, UN Mine Action Team, Canada, GICHD, Estonia, Australia, Benin, Germany, ICBL, and the European Commission.

*See Annex 4 for a summary of interventions on assistance and cooperation.*

### 4. Enhancing Understanding of Efficient and Effective Means to Implement Article 5

The Co-Chairs provided the opportunity for discussion on methods to more rapidly release land, policies and practices for cancelling hazard areas and quality assurance. Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA), Croatia and the GICHD made presentations.

Croatia reported on the land release process in use in that country, emphasizing the need for specific criteria for land cancellation, need for stringent accreditation procedures and the requirement for quality assurance. The GICHD presentation on land release and risk management approaches identified that current procedures for mine clearance are good but there remains a need establish procedures for land release. What will be required is to put in place a systematic process to identify and quantify risk, mitigate that risk if necessary and develop tolerable levels of risk for end user acceptance. The NPA presentation emphasized that land release is not a simple lowering of standards nor does it increase residual risk. In the view of NPA, it increases standards and reduces risk. The land release procedure calls for a logical process of information gathering and government buy-in.

### 5. Other Matters of a Thematic Nature Related to Fulfilling Obligations

Handicap International provided an update on mine risk education. New victims were identified in a number of countries and some preliminary conclusions presented. Handicap International concluded that MRE is required in at risk communities even during conflict, in order to be sustainable MRE must include local representation, MRE needs to creatively address risk taking behaviour, MRE requires data collection, survey and marking and fencing, affected states should be prepared for emergency MRE and importantly, MRE resources needs to be increased by affected states.

*See Annex 5 for a summary of Handicap International's intervention on mine risk education.*

UNDP on behalf of the UN Mine Action Team, also reported on United Nations actions related to MRE and on efforts of the United Nations as it concerns the topic of general and mine action.

## **IV. Closing Remarks**

The Co-Chairs commended States Parties for their presentations but noted the need to focus the deliberations of the Committee. They welcomed the statements by some that they would

meet their Article 5 deadlines, regretted the fact that not all were in a position to finish on time but lauded those who were providing clarity on mine clearance. They noted that many States Parties have not yet pronounced themselves clearly on the issue of extensions, and underlined the need for States Parties to provide such clarity, in particular for those States Parties that are facing deadlines soon.

The Co-Chairs also concluded that we now have a more complete understanding of the extension process and the tools and assistance available to States Parties. What is needed now is for States Parties to use these tools.

*See Annex 6 for the Co-Chairs' Concluding Remarks*

## **Annex 1: Summary of National Interventions**

### **Deadlines in 2009**

**Yemen** (*deadline 1 March 2009*) advised that it expected to clear all areas where casualties were being caused as well as those affecting development by 2009 but also indicated that it would not complete its Article 5 obligations until 2011 or 2012, assuming continued support from the international community.

**Nicaragua** (*deadline 1 May 2009*) advised of its desire to complete its Article 5 obligations by the end of 2008 despite a reduction in the number of deminers and shortfalls in equipment. It also reported that it had a funding shortfall of \$ 4.75 million to achieve that goal.

**Swaziland** (*deadline 1 June 2009*) reported that following a GICHD technical visit and an International Mine Action Training Centre (IMATC) assistance mission, work was underway to verify that the suspected mined area along the border could be confirmed as clear of mines. Swaziland expects that it will achieve its Article 5 obligations prior to 8 MSP.

**Peru** (*deadline 1 March 2009*) reported on its mine problem and challenges both along the border and in the country's infrastructure without providing an expected completion date.

**Senegal** (*deadline 1 March 2009*) reported on the actions it has taken in implementing the Convention, its mine contamination problem and the situation regarding donor support and indicated that it would do what it can to achieve "dans la mesure du possible" by 2009.

**Chad** (*deadline 1 November 2009*) reported that while it had hoped to meet its deadline, realistically, given limited international assistance, it would require an extension.

**France** (Djibouti) (*deadline 1 March 2009*) reported that it would achieve its Article 5 obligations as soon as possible and before 2009.

**Ecuador** (*deadline 1 October 2009*) reported on its mine clearance challenge including its funding needs, and advised that it would be seeking an extension.

**Zimbabwe** (*deadline 1 March 2009*) reported on its mine clearance challenge including its funding needs, and advised that it would be seeking an extension.

**Croatia** (*deadline 1 March 2009*) provided an update including the significant funding it has provided and indicated a requirement for continued international support. It did not provide an expected completion date.

**Thailand** (*deadline 1 March 2009*) reported on its progress, advised of a plan to restructure the Thailand Mine Action Centre and stated its belief that with the first deadlines approaching common implementation challenges are becoming evident which may merit discussion at the Second Review Conference. Thailand indicated that it is likely to request an extension.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina** (*deadline 1 March 2009*) reported on its clearance programme including its funding challenges and reaffirmed that it would be seeking an extension.

**Jordan** (*deadline 1 March 2009*) reported on its remaining hazardous areas, its progress toward meeting its Article 5 obligations and its need to mobilize funding to meet its obligations. It did not provide an expected completion date.

**Malawi** (*deadline 1 March 2009*) reported on its progress to date in shaping its mine action programme and the need for international support including in clarifying its obligations regarding the Convention. It further reported that Norwegian Peoples Aid would be conducting a survey and the results of this survey would determine whether or not Malawi would be seeking an extension.

**Mozambique** (*deadline 1 March 2009*) reported on its progress and advised that it was resurveying its suspected mined areas with an expected result of confirming more mined areas but less overall area. Once this is completed in mid 2007, Mozambique should be able to determine actual costs and time required.

**Denmark** (*deadline 1 March 2009*) reported on the progress it has achieved but did not provide an expected completion date.

**Uganda** (*deadline 1 August 2009*) reported on the status of its programme but did not provide an expected completion date.

**United Kingdom** (*deadline 1 March 2009*) reported on the status of its joint programme with Argentina in the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) but did not provide an expected completion date.

### **Deadlines in 2010**

**Argentina** (*deadline 1 March 2010*) reported on the status of its joint programme with the United Kingdom in the Islas Malvinas (Falkland Islands) but did not provide an expected completion date.

**Tajikistan** (*deadline 1 April 2010*) reported on the status of its programme and called on the international community for assistance. It indicated its plan to assume national ownership in 2008. Tajikistan did not report on its expected completion date.

**Cambodia** (*deadline 1 January 2010*) reported on progress including its successes to date with its new Land Release/Area Reduction policy. Cambodia advised it will likely require an extension to between 2012 to 2015.

**Rwanda** (*deadline 1 December 2010*) reported on its progress and challenges and advised that its deadline was achievable once funded.

**Albania** (*deadline 1 August 2010*) reported on its progress, funding needs and indicated that with funding, it would meet its deadline.

**Tunisia** (*deadline 1 January 2010*) reported on its progress and expected that with 30% of the task remaining it would meet its obligations by December 2009, but was “looking forward” to obtaining international assistance.

### **Deadlines in 2011**

**Mauritania** (*deadline 1 January 2011*) reported on its progress and indicated the need for continued support. It did not provide an expected completion date.

**Zambia** (*deadline 1 August 2011*) made an intervention to the meeting emphasizing its need for assistance. The meeting was also advised that Zambia believes it has secured this assistance and is optimistic it can meet its deadline.

**Colombia** (*deadline 1 March 2011*) reported that it has made a 300% increase in its demining capacity and indicated the need for continued support. It did not provide an expected completion date.

**Guinea Bissau** (*deadline 1 November 2011*) provided an update on clearance around the capital and reported on the need to survey the rest of the country. Once that survey is complete it will be able to advise on completion.

### **Deadlines in 2012 and Beyond**

**Algeria** (*deadline 1 April 2012*) reported on the status of its clearance programme and also advised the Standing Committee that it intends to preserve two mine areas as historical sites. It is aiming to complete its programme by the deadline.

**Chile** (*deadline 1 March 2012*) reported on the status of its clearance programme including that to date it was fully financed nationally. Chile did not report on its expected completion date.

**Ethiopia** (*deadline 1 June 2015*) reported on the status of its programme including that it expected all high priority areas to be cleared by 2010 with all remaining suspected areas to be complete before the deadline. Ethiopia does not forecast a requirement for an extension.

**Burundi** (*deadline 1 April 2014*) reported that 80% of its territory has been cleared of mines and ERW with the remaining 20% expected to be cleared by 2008.

**Angola** (*deadline 1 January 2013*) reported on the status of its programme noting that its mine-related accident rate has gone from 202 in 2005 to 60 in 2006. It also noted its need for assistance, particularly with new technologies. Angola did not provide an expected completion date.

**Greece** (*deadline 1 March 2014*) reported on the status of its programme including that more than 50% of mined areas have been cleared and the expectation that Greece will complete its programme by 2010/2011 well before its deadline.

**Serbia** (*deadline 1 March 2014*) reported on the status of its programme and advised that it expected to finish by 2008, well in advance of its deadline. Serbia also advised of the challenges posed by unexploded ordnance from cluster munitions and an ammunition dump explosion in October 2006.

**Democratic Republic of the Congo** (*deadline 1 November 2012*) reported on the status of its programme and its plans for the near future. DRC hopes that it can meet its deadline.

**Afghanistan** (*deadline 1 March 2013*) reported on its clearance programme, including the fact that it had to lay off 1000 deminers, and advised that in order to finish by the deadline it must clear 110 km<sup>2</sup> each year and will require continued donor support.

**Sudan** (*deadline 1 April 2014*) reported on its programme and advised that it was in the process of shifting from an emergency response capability to implementation of its national demining plan. It did not provide an indication of its expected completion date.

**Cyprus** (*deadline 1 July 2013*) provided information on the status of its clearance programme in the areas under its control as well as within the UN buffer zone.

**Turkey** (*deadline 1 March 2014*) Turkey provided an update on its progress particularly on the Turkish/Syrian border but did not give an indication of a completion date.



## **Annex 2: Summary of Comments Relating to National Interventions**

**The ICBL** expressed disappointment that few States Parties indicated that they would complete their Article 5 obligations on time, that many would either require an extension or did not specify whether or not they would complete their obligations on time, and that, according to the ICBL's count, four have not removed a single mine. The ICBL expressed the hope that greater clarity can be provided in the coming months and further reminded the meeting that the Convention says this work must be done as soon as possible but not later than ten years. The meeting was also reminded that delays are unacceptable and that excuses such as the need for alternatives or of the need for domestic legislation does not excuse a state from its international legal obligations.

**Venezuela** (*deadline 1 October 2009*) advised that they had not spoken because they had nothing new to report since the 7<sup>th</sup> MSP. It further advised that its mine fields were not in any area accessible by civilians and that it had not commenced clearance in six naval sites as Venezuela was discussing, with others, an early warning system.

**Djibouti** (*deadline 1 March 2009*) in response to the ICBL intervention confirmed that it had spared no efforts to clear all mined areas under its jurisdiction and that it was in discussions with France regarding France's obligation to clear an area under French control.

**The ICRC** congratulated States Parties on their presentations and particularly welcomed Swaziland's announcement that they will complete clearance by the 8MSP. The ICRC expressed the hope that that Swaziland and others would use the format adopted at the 7MSP to declare completion. Concern was expressed in regard to a number of States Parties who advised that they would need financial assistance and the ICRC hoped that those in a position to provide assistance would be able to speak to that under the cooperation and assistance part of the agenda. The ICRC too expressed concern on the number of extensions required, the statement that some States Parties were unclear in their plans to achieve their deadlines, the fact that some States Parties have not yet identified the extent of their mined areas and the fact that some States Parties had not advised the meeting of the status of their work.

### **Annex 3: Final Observations of the Co-Chairs on the Statements Regarding Updating of Information on Implementation**

Before closing the discussion on this item, the Norwegian and Chilean Co-Chairs wish to express our gratitude for the broad participation and the high degree of interest shown by most delegations in updating the information concerning the status of compliance with the obligations under Article 5 of the Convention.

We appreciate the quantity and quality of the information made available and the level of transparency achieved, as well as the willingness to respond to the questions raised and to allow for an interactive dialogue.

We also wish to express our thanks to all those delegations who have responded to our suggestion of adjusting their presentations to the order contained in the questionnaire we distributed prior to the present meeting. We are convinced that this methodology will facilitate the compilation of the information obtained.

Yesterday's and today's statements allow us to make a few observations and to underline some of the multiple aspects that have been tackled, without pretending to be exhaustive.

Actually progress has been made and commitment to the implementation of the instrument remains high. Several States Parties told us that they are in a position to comply with their obligations within the established time limits and we congratulate them for that. There remains, however, much to be done. There are, in fact, a number of other States Parties who have mentioned their difficulties, informing us beforehand that they will use the faculty of requesting extension of deadlines.

The process of extension requests was established not to divert us from our ultimate goal but, on the contrary, to refocus on it. In order to provide maximum clarity, the Co-Chairs will work together with the relevant States Parties from now on until the 8MSP.

The statements reveal the enormous efforts that many States Parties are making, both in terms of human and financial resources, in order to comply with the assumed responsibilities. We recognize and value these efforts. We are however deeply concerned about the fact that some States Parties have not even initiated the work so far. We are aware that there are limitations, we recognize that there are needs and we resort therefore to international assistance.

It is a multidimensional problem which needs multidimensional responses. Complex situations request broad cooperation, at the domestic, as well as at the neighbourly, regional and international level. We consider the role of civil society, intergovernmental organizations, regional organisations and the UN system to be essential.

In many cases of border problems, it is also a matter of mutual-confidence building. In this perspective we are pleased to see couples of States Parties cooperating together in order to solve mine problems due to past conflicts. This cooperation confirms that the spirit of the Convention prevails and that there exists a space for humanitarian action.

We wish to conclude by mentioning that awareness-raising and educational campaigns are of prime importance. It needs to be understood that all parties benefit from this effort in terms of development, preservation of the environment and generation of a climate of peace and security.

#### **Annex 4: Summary of Interventions on Assistance and Cooperation**

**Norway** reported that it would continue to meet its obligations under Article 6. Its support for mine clearance is based on principles of humanitarianism, partnerships, national ownership, coherence in mine policies, and operational effectiveness. Implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security by States is considered a key element in post-conflict rebuilding, including mine action.

**Japan** reported that since the 7MSP it has decided to assist six mine affected States Parties at a cost of \$21 million. Additionally Japan has provided US\$ 4.2 million to the National Institute for Demining to enhance the capacity of its management system and US\$ 3 million for emergency mine/UXO surveys in south west Sudan. From a research and development perspective, Japan conducted verification testing on mechanical demining equipment and mine detectors in Cambodia with an aim of eventually turning that equipment over to the Cambodian Government.

**France** reported that it has made various bilateral contributions through the UN and different NGOs and is providing military support to Benin. It also contributes heavily to mine action through the European Union.

**United Kingdom** provided a briefing by the International Mine Action Training Centre Eastern Africa – a joint UK/Kenyan initiative to provide mine action training to a number of different countries.

**Canada** reported that with the “sun setting” of the Canadian Landmine Fund it would continue to provide assistance through the integration of mine action into its humanitarian, peace building and development programmes. As an example, in 2006 Canada provided CA \$ 10.5 million through its dedicated funding and a further CA \$ 23.3 million from other sources for a total of almost CA \$34 million.

**Estonia** reported that it is supporting the international community’s efforts to assist post-conflict recovery areas through the provision of explosive ordnance disposal units to international operations, most notably in Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force.

**Australia** reported on its mine action programme and the fact that in July 2005 it renewed mine action funding at A \$ 75 million to 2010 aimed primarily at the Asian region and representing an increase beyond its original commitment. Australia highlighted its support to Cambodia (A \$ 14 million from 2006 to 2010) with a harmonized approach through a UNDP multi-donor facility with strong engagement by Cambodia. Most mine action funds have been devolved to country and regional managers.

**Benin** made a presentation on its regional mine clearance training centre (CPADD) aimed largely at Francophone Africa that was established in 2002 with assistance from France. They also advised that they were considering conducting some training in English.

**Germany** reported on its mine action assistance programme which has disbursed \$ 205 million to 42 mine affected countries to date. These funds do not include a further \$ 84 million through the European Commission. In 2006/2007 \$ 38 million was provided to 20 countries worldwide. Germany advised that it treats all regions equally with a strong preference to States Parties.

**GICHD** reported on its assistance activities including new publications, a new look website, its work on land release and risk management, linking mine action to development, fencing and marking, mechanical studies, a study on the linkages and mine action, additional studies and training and outreach activities.

**UN Mine Action Team** reported on its efforts to meet Article 5 obligations, including in survey, assistance in the development of national plans, implementation of mine risk education programmes, preparation of Article 7 reports, to ensure a gender perspective is included in all work, assisting in the exchange of information notably through the 10<sup>th</sup> International Meeting of National Mine Action Directors and UN Advisors, and the development of risk management guidelines and appropriate adjustments to IMAS within the year.

**ICBL** expressed concern over the European Commission mainstreaming decisions which could have the consequence of the loss of potentially millions of euros to mine action. This issue is compounded by the loss of a senior focal point within the European Commission coupled with the downloading of project responsibilities to country offices. The ICBL reported on its intended actions and encouraged States Parties, particularly EU States Parties, to express their concern to the Commission.

**The European Commission** reported on its assistance to mine action during the period 2005 to 2007 and provided an update on its new mainstreamed approach to mine action. In the presentation, the EC emphasized the priority that countries in receipt of aid must place on mine action.

## **Annex 5: Summary of Handicap International's intervention on mine risk education**

- Afghanistan - 848 casualties were reported and some accessibility problems were noted as well as the need to include community liaison in clearance programmes.
- Algeria - 51 casualties were reported and serious contamination from mines and ERW was noted. Additionally the mine action programme was about to start but MRE was not evident.
- Angola - 96 casualties were reported and it was noted that MRE significantly helped to reduce the threat. Additionally the LIS helped to target nearly 2000 communities at risk. More work is needed on casualty data management.
- Burundi – 162 casualties were reported with a large number of returnees particularly at risk following the September 2006 ceasefire. Community based MRE is gaining momentum with local educators and pastors trained.
- Cambodia – 440 casualties were reported a drop of 49%. MRE is almost universal and is integrated into the school system.
- Colombia – 1,110 casualties were recorded with 338 of them being civilian. There is a need for more MRE particularly for IDPs.
- Eritrea – 68 casualties. MRE was provided as part of peacekeeping in the temporary security zone and in the countryside.
- Mozambique – 57 casualties which was an increase, possibly as a result of a decrease in MRE. Emergency UXO-risk reduction was conducted as a result of the 22 March 2007 explosion of a stockpile which caused 130 deaths and 515 injuries.
- Philippines – 145 (primarily military although 18 civilians were also affected). The casualties were mainly caused by command detonated AV mines or IEDs. MRE may be required.
- Sudan – at least 79 casualties but there is no systematic data collection. While there has been a dramatic increase in the mine action programme, MRE and other mine action activities are severely challenged by the size and climate of the country.
- Turkey – 194 military casualties reported in the Article 7 report. Civil society has reported a further 220 (22 children) casualties. There is limited MRE and a need to develop a more comprehensive mine action programme.

## Annex 6: The Co-Chairs' Concluding Remarks

- It has been an exceptionally rich debate.
- The Co-Chairs would like to commend the States Parties that have been forthcoming, have provided new information, and have engaged in debate.
- The past two days have shown that there is a need to tighten up and focus the deliberations of this Committee. We have heard some statements of a general nature, and other on themes that are worked on in other Committees, like stockpile destruction and victim assistance. To meet future challenges, this Committee must really concentrate on mine clearance. The length of statements is another issue. We should avoid statements that last for more than 10 minutes. There might be a need to agree on such a limitation, to make sure we share the time available. We thank UNDP for showing an example by making available the full statement while presenting a brief summary. That constitutes a “best practice”.
- We would in particular like to welcome the confirmations from some countries that they expect to finish mine clearance within the deadlines determined by the Convention.
- Unfortunately, not all States Parties will be in a position to finish in time. Some States Parties have made use of this meeting to provide clarity about their intentions to ask for an extension. Many States Parties have, however, did not pronounce themselves clearly on this issue yet. As Co-Chairs of this Committee, it is our duty to underline the need to provide such clarity, in particular for those SP that are facing deadlines soon.
- We now have a better overview over the extension request process, and over tools and assistance available. These tools and assistance will only be useful if SP make use of them. It is the States Parties with Article 5 obligations that must communicate to the rest of us how they will proceed to address their remaining challenges. That is the basis for cooperation, and the basis for an extension request.
- Let me reiterate the message we delivered earlier today when we wrapped up the examination of status reviews. With a view to providing as much clarity as possible about the situation concerning extension requests, the Co-Chairs will work together with relevant States Parties in the period between this meeting of the Committee and the 8MSP.
- Lastly, I will refer to the words of Ambassador Martabit. Yesterday, when opening the meeting of this Committee, he pointed out that we are now entering a new phase. In this connection, he recalled the need to continue relying on the principles for cooperation under this Convention: Clarity, transparency and predictability.
- On behalf of both co-chairs, I thank delegations for their participation and involvement in the work of this Committee. Thanks to the secretariat, Co-Rapporteurs, ISU and interpreters.