

Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention

Closing remarks by the Co-Chairs (Argentina and Italy)

27 April 2007

To close this meeting, Argentina and Italy would like to share some observations:

- First: We are pleased to see that steps are being taken towards universal acceptance of the Convention.

We once again welcome Montenegro and Indonesia to the family of States Parties.

And we welcome the ongoing universalization efforts of all States Parties, the ICBL, the ICRC, the UN, the OAS and others.

- Second: We are pleased with the amount of energy and attention being directed towards resource mobilization, both through the Resource Mobilisation Contact Group and the Mine Action and Development Contact Group.

However, we were concerned to hear during this meeting how mainstreaming of mine action funding can go wrong.

We should therefore remember the call made in the final report of the First Review Conference for “a renewed commitment ... during the period 2005-2009, through means such as dedicated funds to assist in the implementation of the Convention and by mainstreaming support to mine action through broader humanitarian, development, peace-building and peace support programmes.”

A variety of actions are necessary to both mobilize funds and to use these funds in an efficient and effective manner.

- Third: We are pleased with the will of States Parties to volunteer information on implementation beyond what is minimally required under Article 7.

However, we noted at this Standing Committee meeting fewer States Parties volunteered information on Article 3 in accordance with Nairobi Action Plan #54 than last year.

And while the deadline for submitting Article 7 reports does not occur until Monday, we would note that some of you have a lot of work to do this weekend: Only about one-third of the reports due this year have been submitted.

- Fourth: While it was noted that we have a long ways to go towards full implementation of Article 9, we saw at this meeting that progress is being made.

We wish to highlight in particular the new element concerning Article 9 which was raised at this meeting – “administrative and other measures” taken to prevent prohibited acts.

We thank those delegations which prepared updates on this matter in response to our questionnaire.

- Finally: It is clear that major challenges to implementation remain.

However, we are pleased that our Convention's implementation machinery is working well.

Moreover, we are pleased with the high quality of substantive and organizational preparations for the 8MSP.

- Before closing, please allow me to thank our Co-Rapporteurs – Albrecht of Germany and Lenah of Kenya, who is filling in for our friend Philip Owade.
- Let me thank as well the interpretation team for their professionalism during what has been a busy week, and, the European Commission and Canada for providing these services.

With that said, I wish to declare this meeting close but I would appeal to you to stay in our seats for the closing remarks of the Director of the GICHD.