

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

Co-Chairs' Closing Remarks

26 April 2007

- It has been an exceptionally rich debate.
- Co-Chairs would like to commend the SP 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 SP will be in a position to finish in time. Some SP have made use of this meeting to provide clarity about their intentions to ask for an extension. Many SP have, however, not pronounced 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 SP with art. 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 Co-Chair Camilo phrased earlier today, when he 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 SP 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.