

**Notes for ICRC intervention to the
Standing Committee on Mine Clearance
under the agenda item**

"Updates from relevant States Parties on the Status of Implementation"

Wednesday 25 April 2007

Thank you Mr. co- chair,

Let me begin by thanking all States Parties that have taken the floor so far, that is, most of those that have mine clearance deadlines in 2009 and 2010 to provide updates on their progress and plans.

We wish to warmly congratulate those States that have clearly expressed their plans, including timetables, for completing clearance of all mined areas under their jurisdiction or control within their deadlines under Article 5. Some have however expressed the fact that they will need financial help to achieve this objective, and in this regard we look forward to hearing from States Parties in a position to provide assistance as to how they intend to support these efforts.

We would like to congratulate in particular the Kingdom of Swaziland for having announced that by the 8th assembly of States Parties, they will be in a position to declare completion of its Article 5 obligation.

In this respect, we hope that Swaziland and others will be using the format adopted at the last assembly of States Parties for declaring fulfilment of their respective article 5 obligations.

However, Mr. co-chair, we also wish to express here a few observations and concerns. First, we are concerned that out of 24 states parties that have taken the floor today, seven have already indicated that they will request an extension of time in order to fulfil their article 5 obligations. Some have not indicated how much time they would need to complete demining and how they intend to fulfil their obligation, even assuming that an extension would be granted. This state of fact does not seem to fall squarely within Nairobi action plan number 27, which is enjoining states "to ensure that few, if any, State Party will feel compelled to request an extension in accordance with the procedure set out in article 5."

Secondly, some other States Parties have not indicated clearly whether they plan to achieve clearance of all their mined areas within article 5 deadlines and how they will do so, even assuming that the necessary resources are available.

Thirdly, what we find most worrying is that a number of States have not yet, 8 years after the entry into force for these states, identified the extent of mined areas in their country or have not carried out a specific survey yet.

Lastly, we find it regrettable that some States Parties with 2009 and 2010 deadline have not taken the floor to present the status of their mine clearance work.

We wish to remind all members of the convention community that the anti-personnel mine ban convention constitutes the legal framework for mine action for the 153 States Parties to the treaty. With this in mind, we look forward to hearing more specific information from the concerned State Party on how they plan to fulfil their obligations under article 5, as they committed to doing so in the Nairobi Action plan.

We hope that demining activities between now and the occurrence of their deadlines in 2009 or 2010 will be reinforced. These efforts and achievements should be taken into account in evaluating future request for extension.

Mr. Co chair,

Meaningful efforts must be made to complete clearance of all mined areas as required by Article 5 if the convention is to succeed in achieving its goal of eliminating anti-personnel mines forever.

We thank you.