



Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer
of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

INTERSESSIONAL PROGRAMME 2003-2004

STANDING COMMITTEE ON STOCKPILE DESTRUCTION

Meeting Report 12 February 2004

I. Introduction

Pursuant to the decisions of the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties (5MSP) to the Convention, the meeting of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction was convened by its Co-Chairs, Mr. Luigi Scotto of Italy and Mr. Carlos J. Arroyave of Guatemala with the support of the Co-Rapporteurs, Ms. Rabab Fatima of Bangladesh and Mr. John MacBride of Canada. The meeting was held in Geneva with the generous support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

In accordance with the direction of the 5MSP the Standing Committee focussed its attention on States Parties with a deadline for stockpile destruction before the First Review Conference, and also heard updates on the status of destruction efforts from other States Parties and States not Parties.

The Standing Committee had before it a Food-For-Thought paper entitled “Getting the Job Done”, presented by the Co-Chairs highlighting on the need for greater international cooperation for stockpile destruction under Article 6; and also reviewed an earlier paper tabled at the First Session of the Standing Committee Meetings 2002-2003 entitled “Post Stockpile Destruction Measures”.

II. Overview of Stockpile Destruction Efforts

The Co-Chairs distributed a detailed update on the status of implementation of Article 4. In their opening remarks, the Co-Chairs observed that: 117 States Parties now no longer have stockpiles and by the time of the First Review Conference that number was expected to increase to 120; over 30,700,000 anti-personnel mines have been destroyed; and that destruction of stockpiles was an important means of preventative mine action. They congratulated Argentina and Venezuela for completion of their destruction programmes since the 5MSP.

Steve Goose of the ICBL made a presentation on the status of stockpile destruction efforts worldwide. He noted that stockpile destruction continued to be extremely successful with few problems, but more donor support for destruction efforts was required. He further remarked that: 55 States Parties had completed destruction, three since the 5MSP; 13 States were in the process of destruction; two others (Algeria and Bangladesh) were yet to start; 49 States have officially stated that they have no stocks through their Article 7 reports; 15 States are not believed to hold stocks as gathered from informal consultations although they have not yet formally declared so; a further 9 need to announce their stocks although of these Sao Tome and Timor Leste are not believed to have a stockpile. He informed that besides Argentina and Venezuela, Uganda, Republic of Congo, Chile, Tunisia and Kenya had recently completed destruction of their stockpiles.

Mr. Goose reported that while over 30 million anti-personnel mines had been destroyed, States Parties still held over 8 million mines. With respect to retention of mines under Article 3, he expressed concern with regard to some 69,200 mines retained by Turkmenistan but informed that a representative of Turkmenistan had recently indicated that it planned to destroy most of them. He observed that some States Parties which were past their deadlines (Equatorial Guinea, Namibia, Solomon Island and Saint Lucia) were late in reporting and needed to furnish details regarding their

destruction. Mauritania had provided inconsistent information in its Article 7 report. In addition, destruction updates were due from Algeria, Bangladesh, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Mr. Goose highlighted the need for assistance, particularly for those States which had joined the Convention recently and which are believed to have large stocks (Belarus, Greece and Serbia and Montenegro); and those believed to possess ADAM mines (Turkey and Greece) and PFM mines (Belarus) which might require technical assistance for destruction. He stressed on the importance of stockpile destruction as an important treaty obligation and termed it as preventive mine action.

III. Updates from relevant States Parties on the status of implementation

The Co-Chairs proceeded with presentations by States Parties in the order of those with deadlines before the First Review Conference, those with deadlines following the First Review Conference and States not Parties.

A. States Parties with deadlines before the First Review Conference

- **Argentina** reported that it had completed its stockpile destruction and provided a complete record to the GICHD for use by other states. It stated that stockpile destruction was the first of four goals it had set for completion before the Review Conference. Its other goals are: to provide information on technology used to assist others in stockpile destruction; commitment to provide humanitarian demining training to other nations; and promulgation of national legislation. Argentina informed that destruction was carried out with comprehensive environmental and security safeguards in place.
- **Tajikistan** advised that it had recently destroyed 1,768 mines overseen by the Deputy Prime Minister, heads of ministries and institutions, diplomatic representation, international organizations and local NGOs, as a transparency and confidence building measure. It plans to destroy its last stocks before the deadline.
- **Venezuela** confirmed that it had completed its destruction and showed a video of that activity. It further advised that the destruction took place within an international context to provide transparency and as a confidence building measure. Venezuela also advised that it would soon ratify Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.
- **Japan** reported that it had completed the destruction of its stockpile on 8 February 2003 and that it would implement all obligations. It further emphasized the importance of implementation as a universalization measure.
- The **OAS** reported on the status of Article 7 reporting for **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines** and for **Saint Lucia** as the deadline for the latter had passed. It informed that these reports would be forthcoming, and expected they would be provided at the General Assembly of the OAS in June in Quito, Ecuador. The OAS also noted that the General Assembly would be followed by a regional seminar as part of the "Road to Nairobi". Regarding **Colombia**, the OAS advised that there would be a technical meeting in Bogota next month.

The Co-Chair emphasized the importance of announcing the completion of destruction before the Review Conference by those states required to do so. He further emphasised the requirement for States Parties to contact Liberia to determine its status as its deadline was fast approaching.

B. States Parties with Deadlines Following the First Review Conference

- **Afghanistan** reported on a pilot project launched with the assistance of UNMACA and NATO to destroy stockpiled mines around the city of Kabul which started on 12 December 2003 and which was expected to be completed later this month. The first destruction was

executed on 12 February. It reported that a national working group had been established to learn from the experience of the pilot project and highlighted the need for proper planning and international assistance, both financial and technical, to accomplish destruction commitments.

- **Bangladesh** congratulated the Co-Chairs on their Food for Thought paper and reiterated the fact that stockpile destruction had not received the same level of support afforded other areas of mine action. The meeting was advised of the status of the destruction project in Bangladesh and informed that it was expected to start on time with completion before the March 2005 deadline. The requirement for international assistance in this area was underscored.
- **Algeria** reported that it had submitted its initial Article 7 report in April 2003, which informed that 150,050 mines had to be destroyed. The first destruction is planned for May 2004 with a public ceremony to destroy 3030 mines in three lots. The plan, to be executed by trained military engineers, will be completed by the deadline of 1 April 2006.
- **Belarus** reported that to date it had destroyed 250,000 anti-personnel mines at a cost of US\$ 152,000 but that it would be unable to meet its deadline without assistance. Belarus expects that plasma destruction technology seemed most suitable for destruction of PFM1 mines but had not yet been tried. The estimated average unit cost for destruction would be US\$ 0.66.
- **Burundi** reported that it would retain 1200 anti-personnel mines under the terms of Article 3.
- **Cyprus** reported that it had destroyed 4,800 anti-personnel mines and would meet its deadline. It submitted its Article 7 report on 12 February 2004 reporting 44,548 mines to be destroyed in small quantities by open detonation. Estimated costs were US\$ 1,000,000 or approximately US\$20.00 per mine.
- **Lithuania** informed that as a signatory it had provided a voluntary Article 7 report. It had 8,091 mines and all to be retained for training purposes. A review of that number is being undertaken and the stockpile decided in excess of training needs after completion of the review will be destroyed. The schedule and method of destruction remains to be determined.
- **Colombia** restated its commitment to the Convention and reported it had destroyed 1,291 anti-personnel mines to date. It will retain 987 under the terms of Article 3.
- **Eritrea** reported that it had no stockpile but would retain a small amount for training.
- **Romania** reported that its destruction was essentially complete with a few mines being held for the final destruction ceremony. The meeting was also advised that Romania would reduce the number of mines to be retained under the terms of Article 3 from 4,000 to 2,500.
- **Sierra Leone**, attending the Standing Committee meetings for the first time, reported that it had no reliable record of the number and types of mines destroyed in rebel held areas. It provided its Article 7 report earlier in the week reporting that its entire stock of 956 mines originally to be retained for training has been destroyed in the presence of UNAMSIL. It expressed concern of the possibility of possession of mines by non-state actors in a neighbouring country.
- **Serbia and Montenegro** made a detailed presentation on its plan to destroy its stocks optimistically within two years but realistically within three. Cost was expected to be approximately US\$ 2 million to destroy 1.3 million mines.
- **Tanzania** reported that it had destroyed 9,837 mines on 27 March 2003, 5,489 on 28 August 2003, 4,338 on 29 January 2004, and planned to destroy the remaining 3,177 between July

and September 2004 before the First Review Conference. It will retain 1,146 mines under the terms of Article 3.

- **Turkey** has commenced the planning to destroy 2.9 million mines within four years. Construction of an environmentally friendly destruction facility has started.
- **Uruguay** reported that it is destroying its mines in the presence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and ICBL. The last two destruction events occurred on 3 July and 16 November 2003 with 200 mines destroyed at each event. Uruguay plans to retain 500 mines.
- **Namibia** reported that the Ministry of Defence destroyed all of its stocks in May 1998 with only a small number retained for training. It will submit its Article 7 before the First Review Conference.
- **Cameroon** reported that it had destroyed its complete stock of 500 mines in November 2003. Additionally it reported that it had 3,154 “exercise” mines used for training.
- **Mauritania** reported that it had originally planned to use its remaining 5,700 mines for training but upon review had decided to reduce that amount to 720. It called for international assistance to complete destruction.
- **Zambia** advised that it had originally planned to retain 6,691 mines under the terms of Article 3. After review a decision had been made to reduce that number to 3,346 and eventually to zero. Zambia further stated that it intends to destroy the difference of 3,341 preferably before the next Standing Committee meeting but needs assistance from the international community.

C. States Not Party to the Convention

- **Ukraine** reported that the issue with ratification of the Convention continues to be the difficulty in destroying its stock of PFM mines. The Standing Committee was also advised that a draft ratification law was being circulated to the appropriate ministries for comment. The law will state, “the law on ratification enters into force upon completion of the destruction of the PFM stockpile in Ukraine”.
- **Indonesia** reported that it was continuing to work toward ratification of the Convention and that it had a stockpile of about 16,000 anti-personnel mines. In due course Indonesia will reduce that number to about 10,000 mines to be retained.

IV. Food for thought paper – Getting the Job Done

The Co-Chairs underscored the need to assist States Parties in meeting their Article 4 obligations and observed that sufficient attention had not been paid to this need. They called upon all States Parties to combine their efforts to address this real need. It was important for this Standing Committee to develop innovative approaches in this regard through greater engagement of traditional donors, non-traditional donors and regional organization.

State Parties were also reminded that stockpile destruction was an activity that qualified as Official Development Assistance (ODA). States Parties were asked to carefully review the paper and prepare to discuss it at the June Standing Committee meeting with a view to reporting to the Review Conference. Canada informed the Standing Committee of its support for the paper noting that stockpile destruction qualified as ODA and that fact should be communicated to capitals.

V. Cooperation and Assistance

- **A Case Study in Cooperation – NAMSA Projects in Europe:** Mr. Steve Brown of the NATO Material and Supply Agency (NAMSA) made a presentation on the Partnership for Peace (PFP) Trust Fund process and on the projects NAMSA has completed, those currently underway and those under development. He highlighted two areas of concern with regard to destruction and the Convention. The first was that the definition of an anti-personnel mine in Article 2 specifically states that an anti-personnel mine is a mine that was designed to be victim activated. However the Russian translation of that term did not include the word “designed”. This fact causes confusion as to what types of mines must be destroyed. The second issue raised was that of open detonation. The Standing Committee was advised that in NAMSA’s opinion open detonation was not necessarily the least expensive or most effective method of destroying stockpiles.
- **PFM Destruction Testing in Ukraine:** Mr. Peter Kresja made a presentation on the status of the European Commission’s tests on PFM destruction in Ukraine. He reported that the second phase of the tests aimed at determining the best or most likely technology to be used in destroying these mines had started in February. A decision on that technology could be made in July with actual destruction of the mines starting in January 2005.
- The **UNDP** reported that it has supported a number stockpile destruction projects at the request of Canada, including in Uganda, Congo Brazzaville and Ukraine and expected to do the same shortly in Bangladesh.

VI. Matters of a Thematic Nature Related to Stockpile Destruction

In 2003 the Co-Chairs distributed a food for thought paper entitled “Post Stockpile Destruction Measures”. The paper addressed the issues of promoting confidence, transparency and information exchange. It also addressed the issue of newly discovered stockpiles. The Co-Chairs invited the States Parties to comment on this paper at the June meeting. Canada proposed to establish best practices particularly with respect to discovery of stockpiles after the deadline had passed. The recommended best practice was to report the discovery immediately and destroy within a year.

VII. Other matters

The Co-Chairs provided an opportunity for statements by two States not Parties on matters other than stockpile destruction given that these States were unable to deliver these statements earlier in the week:

- **Kyrgyz Republic** claimed that given its geography and that it cannot station forces at high altitudes, it needs mines. It has inherited stocks from the former Soviet Union and its disputes with bordering countries have not yet been resolved. Borders are mined at a density of 2,000 to 3,000 mines per kilometre.
- **Ethiopia** reported that with a Landmine Impact Survey completed in 2003 and to be finalized in the next two months, it would be in a position to develop a national mine action plan and identify the socio-economic impact within the country.