



THE UNITED NATIONS MINE ACTION

Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction Geneva, 2-3 June 2008

Intervention on behalf of the UN Mine Action Team Delivered by Gustavo Laurie, (UNMAS)

Madame Co-Chair,

It is my pleasure to provide an update on UN support to stockpile destruction on behalf of the UN Mine Action Team. As the responsibility to destroy stockpiled anti-personnel mines rests with the States Parties themselves, many of which have provided their own updates to the Standing Committee, our statement highlights areas where the United Nations has provided particular support; it does not represent a comprehensive account of the progress made in stockpile destruction.

The rate of compliance with Article 4 obligations has been particularly noteworthy until last year. Five States Parties faced Article 4 deadlines since the last meeting of States Parties was convened in Jordan.¹ Two of them met their obligations deadlines. During the reporting period the United Nations has provided mine action assistance, including specific assistance for stockpile destruction, to those two States Parties: Sudan and Burundi.

As already reported, since the Eighth Meeting of States Parties in November 2007, Sudan has completed its stockpile destruction programme with support from the UNDP and the United Nations Mine Action Office (UNMAO). On 31 March 2008, Sudan fulfilled its obligation under Article 4 by destroying a second batch of 6,078 stockpiled antipersonnel mines and 109 anti-vehicle mines, one day ahead of the 1 April deadline. The destruction ceremony took place in Juba, and was attended by high level national authorities, representatives from the diplomatic community, the UN and various humanitarian and development actors.

Also Burundi has successful in this regard, where on 17th March 2008 the remaining stockpile of 664 AP mines was destroyed. The ceremony was chaired by the President of Republic of Burundi, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General

¹ Belarus, Greece, Turkey, Burundi and Sudan.

of the United Nations, Ambassadors and UN agencies. Support for the destruction was given by UNDP, the Burundian Army and the Mines Advisory Group.

In addition, UNMAS initiated stockpile destruction activities in the territory of *Western Sahara*.

Madame Co-Chair, distinguished delegates,

I would like to conclude by congratulating all the States Parties that have presented updates on the progress made towards meeting their obligation to destroy all stockpiled anti-personnel mines. The good level of compliance with this obligation brings us a step closer to the goal of a world free of the threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war but we also note with concern about those four states that have not yet submitted their Article 7 initial reports², thus missing to report on their national status with regards to stockpiles of anti-personnel mines. While the UN is not providing any specific mine action support to those States Parties, we do have UN presence in their countries and we would be glad to undertake demarches with the aim of encouraging them to prepare and submit their outstanding initial reports. Demarches of this kind made in the past have brought some positive results. The United Nations stands ready to assist States Parties in need of technical or financial support for their stockpile destruction obligations with the Convention.

Thank you.

² Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia and Haiti