

**INTERVENTION OF GUSTAVO LAURIE (PERU), CO-CHAIR FOR THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON MINE CLEARANCE AND RELATED
TECHNOLOGIES ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT FOR THE OTTAWA TREATY**

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

I will make a brief presentation of a paper that was circulated among all the participants here yesterday morning entitled “Implementation Support for the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines”. I hope everybody had the time to read it.

Probably not all of you know are aware of where the Intersessional Programme of Work comes from. It is indeed a very original way of working and gathering people from so different backgrounds and so different origins. It is a very special forum where States, NGO’s, international organizations and even individuals meet to discuss in a outspoken, open and transparent way trying to keep moving the engine that would conduct us to a collective goal : a mine free world.

The Intersessional Programme of Work is exactly that : the engine of the Ottawa Treaty. I think this is the best way to define it. But as engine it needs continued and sustained fuel to keep it moving.

Lets review a little bit of history.

The Ottawa Treaty had not envisaged, on purpose, the creation of any Secretariat responsible for its management. Therefore the States Parties themselves – individually and collectively- have the responsibility to ensure the compliance with the provisions and obligations of the treaty. This situation pushed the States Parties to discuss directly among them the way forward. At the same time the funding of a bureaucratic structure was avoided so financial sources could have better opportunities to be channeled to mine action on the field.

As a result of various consultations the Intersessional Programme of Work was established by the First Meeting of the State Parties of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines, in Maputo, in 1999 in order to assist State Parties in the effective implementation of their provisions. Five Standing Committees were established in order to cover the main areas.

At the same opportunity (the Maputo Meeting) the States Parties accepted the kind offer of the GICHD to provide administrative and logistical resources to assist the intersessional programme. That is why we meet in Geneva.

During the first intersessional year the Standing Committees met twice. Co-Chairs and Co-Rapporteurs of a same Standing Committee met previously in order to organise their agendas.

I was Co-Rapporteur for the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance during that first intersessional year. I know by first hand how consuming this position can be. I was accustomed to UN Meetings where one of the States is designated as rapporteur and its only task is to take a look at the draft report prepared by some skillful officer of the respective Secretariat. So I was looking with my best smile for the person who was going to do that

work. I was really shocked when I realized that the report was really going to be done by the Co-Rapporteurs and not by an unexisting Secretariat. Was hard work.

But I never regretted this to happened. The International Programme of Work gave me the opportunity to develop new skills, to find some of the best human beings I've ever met and to be involved in a humanitarian and noble cause I deeply love. I also learned to deal with NGOs and I also learned that States and NGOs can work very good together and in partnership when we share the final goals. I hope I also be helpful for country efforts to meet the objectives of the Mine Ban Treaty.

After the Second Meeting of the State Parties, held in Geneva, in September last year, I became Co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Mine clearance and related technologies. The work is even much harder than before. Preparing an agenda its very demanding and time consuming. To improve the intersessional work the States Parties decided this time the establishment of a Coordinating Committee. The Coordinating Committee serves as an intersessional to the intersessional, insuring its consistency and its sustainability, we also discuss possible ways to ameliorate our work here. But it is also very much time consuming and we are increasingly facing new challanges.

At this stage is absolutely clear for me that the Intersessional Programme of Work is essential for the Mine Ban Treaty to succeed. As I said before the Intersessional is the engine of this process and we must ensure that it would continue working as effectively as it is working till now, or even better.

But, in order to give this evolutive process the sustainability needed it is important that the States Parties take some action in order to enhance the support of the arrangements of the Intersessional Work. GICHD could provide this enhance support through the establishment of a support unit within the Center. This would represent a slight enlargement of the staff already assisting the Intersessionals and some extra resources. This support unit, which would be accountable to States Parties through the Presidente and the Coordinating Committee, in no ways shall be considered as a Secretariat or a subsidiary body. GICHD is an independent centre of excellence in mine action –we have appretiated several times this week the quality of their products - and fits better than other entity I know to make the kind of support we are now needing in the preparation of meetings of the Standing Committees and of the Coordinating Committee, elaboration of working documents, communication, etc. GICHD is willing to give a proposal of this type a positive consideration on the understanding that the offer would be accepted by the States Parties.

The next opportunity to do is fortunately very soon : the Third Meeting of the State Parties, that will take place in Managua, Nicaragua, next September. If the States Parties agree that GICHD can assist the implementation process in the enhanced way proposed a decision to accept an offer from the GICHD shall be mandated in Managua.

I request therefore your support to this timely initiative.

Thank you very much