



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

INTERSESSIONAL PROGRAMME 2001-2002

STANDING COMMITTEE ON STOCKPILE DESTRUCTION

May 30, 2002
Meeting Report

I. Introduction

Pursuant to the decisions of the Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention (3MSP), the meeting of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction (SCSD) was convened by its Co-Chairs, Mr. Vice Skracic of Croatia and Mr. Peter Truswell of Australia, with the support of its Co-Rapporteurs, Mr. René Haug of Switzerland and Mr. Radu Horumba of Romania. The meeting was held in Geneva with the generous support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

The second meeting of the SCSD focused its attention on: the status, plans and progress for stockpile destruction in States Parties and non-States Parties; the safety and storage of stockpiles; assistance and cooperation in the area of stockpile destruction; and technical aspects relating to the implementation of stockpile destruction obligations.

II. Overview of the Status of Implementation

The Co-Chairs welcomed the progress in stockpile destruction and expressed their hope that with cooperation and assistance States Parties will be able to meet their deadlines for stockpile destruction, which for a number of countries are fast approaching in 2003. The Co-Chairs distributed a chart setting out the most recent information on stockpile destruction of all States Parties and noted that this document is available on the GICHD web site (www.gichd.ch).

Stephen Goose from the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and Landmine Monitor gave an update of global stockpile destruction efforts. He presented the following assessment: 33 States Parties have completed their stockpile destruction; 32 States Parties have never stockpiled anti-personnel (AP) mines; and, although Article 7 reports have not been submitted in all cases, it is estimated that 84 States Parties do not have stockpiles. Mr. Goose concluded that in general States Parties are making progress in stockpile destruction, noting also though that a small number seem to have problems.

III. Update on Implementation Plans and Progress

A. Presentations by States Parties

Albania: Ms. Mira Schneider of the Permanent Mission of Albania in Geneva gave a presentation on the stockpile destruction process in her country. With the help of donor countries and the NATO Partnership for Peace Trust Fund, Albania, under the organization of NAMSA, successfully completed the destruction of 1,607,420 AP mines in an efficient, cost-effective and environmentally safe manner.

Yemen: Colonel Mansour Al-Ezzi from the Yemen Mine Action Center gave a video presentation of the successful stockpile destruction program in his country, which has completed the destruction of its stocks well ahead of the 2003 destruction deadline.

B. Presentations by prospective States Parties: Greece, Turkey, and Belarus

Greece: Major Christogiannis Ionannis of the Greek Ministry of Defense presented Greece's concept for the demilitarization of AP mines which involves mine clearance and stockpile destruction.

Turkey: Metin Kesap and Salin Korkutan, both of the Turkish Ministry of Defense, gave a presentation of the preparatory work undertaken in their country in the area of mine clearance and stockpile destruction. Both Turkey and Greece have announced their intention to accede to the Convention.

Belarus: Dr. Aleksander Baichorov of Belarus' Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented the challenge that his country faces for the destruction of the 3.7 million PFM type mines on its territory. He appealed for help with the technically difficult destruction of these mines so that Belarus could join the Convention and implement its stockpile destruction provisions.

C. National Statements on Stockpile Destruction (States Parties)

Chad: Chad reported that it has completed a national inventory of its AP mines and has begun the destruction of mines uncovered on its territory. So far, Chad has destroyed 4063 AP mines. It expects to destroy the totality of its stockpiled AP mines by the end of the year.

Chile: Chile reported that its stockpile destruction program is ongoing, that it has so far destroyed 16,820 AP mines. In addition, it indicated that 50% will be destroyed by August 2002, with the remaining 50% destroyed by September 2003.

Colombia: Colombia reported that it has cleared 1,023 AP mines and 16,000 explosive charges. Having undertaken the commitment to destroy and ban AP mines, Colombia is faced with the use of AP mines and handmade explosive devices by armed non-state actors on its territory. In Colombia AP mines and antitank mines that were in place before Colombia became a State Party continue to be used to protect power lines, utilities and other civilian infrastructure from guerrilla attack.

Congo (Brazzaville): Congo reported that it completed its national survey, which indicates there are 5,092 AP mines in stock. Congo intends to keep 400 AP mines for training purposes and destroy the remaining 4,600. The representative of Congo appealed for international assistance with respect to stockpile destruction.

Croatia: Croatia reported that it recently uncovered an additional 3,535 stockpiled AP mines. During Phase I of its destruction program it destroyed 52,000 AP Mines. The destruction of an additional 59,392 AP mines is underway. It will destroy its stockpile well before the 2003 deadline. Croatia intends to retain 7,000 AP mines for testing and training purposes.

Guinea-Bissau: Guinea-Bissau reported that it has 4,968 AP mines in its stock and intends to destroy its stockpile before its 2005 deadline.

Italy: Italy reported that it had a stockpile of 7.1 million AP mines and that it expects to destroy its remaining 380,000 AP mines well before its October 2003 deadline.

Italy has acquired particular expertise in the destruction of a large stockpile of AP mines and is willing to share this with other countries.

Japan: Japan reported that it had destroyed 605,000 AP mines by March 2002 and that the remaining stockpile of about 400,000 will be destroyed by the end of February 2003.

Jordan: Jordan reported that it had a stockpile of 92,342 AP mines, which will be destroyed in an 11-phase destruction plan. So far, Jordan has destroyed 46,552 AP mines in 6 Phases. By the end of the year, Jordan will have destroyed another 30,000 AP mines. Jordan expects to have completed the destruction of its stockpile before the May 2003 deadline.

Kenya: Kenya informed the SCSD that it has submitted its initial Article 7 report, thereby correcting out-of-date information. It indicated that there are 38,774 stockpiled AP mines on the territory of Kenya and that destruction has not yet started. However, Kenya plans to complete destruction by the last quarter of 2003. Kenya will retain 3,000 AP mines for training and research purposes.

Nicaragua: Nicaragua reported that on April 25, 2002 it destroyed 15,000 AP mines and that about 80% of its original stockpile is now destroyed. Nicaragua plans to complete the destruction of its remaining AP mines by the time of the Fourth Meeting of States Parties.

Peru: Peru reported that it had completed the destruction of the last of its 322,656 stockpiled AP mines on its territory on September 14, 2001 in the presence of the media and international representatives. Peru might offer assistance to destroy AP mines stockpiles to other countries.

Romania: Romania reported that at the time it joined the Convention it had 1,076,839 AP mines and 78,995 APM components. According to its existing plan Romania will have destroyed its stockpile by March 2004, one year prior to its destruction deadline. The current stockpile is 918,920 AP Mines (April 2002). Romania will retain 4,000 AP mines for training and development purposes. Stockpile destruction continues.

Slovenia: Slovenia reported that it initially had 171,000 AP mines, that it had destroyed more than 120,000 by May 2002, and that it will destroy the remaining stockpile before its 2003 deadline. It will retain 3,000 AP mines (instead of 7,000) for training and detection purposes.

Solomon Islands: The Solomon Islands declared that it has no stockpiled AP mines.

Thailand: Thailand reported that it has destroyed 111,557 AP mines so far and that it will destroy 120,000 AP mines this year and 100,168 AP mines before its 2003 destruction deadline. Thailand will retain 4,970 AP mines for training and research purposes.

Tunisia: Tunisia indicated that its stockpile destruction process is ongoing. Of its initial stockpile, only 16,575 AP mines remain to be destroyed. Tunisia plans to complete the destruction process by January 2004.

Uganda: Uganda declared that it recently submitted its Article 7 report which states that it has a stockpile of 6,782 AP mines. Uganda plans to complete the destruction of

its stockpile at a central location by January 2004. Uganda will retain 2,400 AP mines for training and detection purposes.

C. National Statements on Stockpile Destruction (Prospective States Parties)

Central African Republic: The Central African Republic reported that it has not used, transferred or produced AP mines, and there are no minefields on its territory.

Indonesia: Indonesia said that it intends to ratify the Convention and that so far it has destroyed 6,000 AP mines of its initial stockpile of 22,000.

Ukraine: Mr. Volodymyr Dziub from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Ukraine said that it is the intention of his country to become a State Party in the foreseeable future. International assistance for the efficient, cost-effective and environmentally safe destruction of PFM type mines would be most helpful in securing the accession of his country to the Convention.

Yugoslavia, Federal Republic of: Yugoslavia reported that a government decision to join the Convention was adopted in 2001. The Ministry of Defense announced an intention to destroy up to 90,000 AP mines, if financial assistance can be provided. NAMSA visited Belgrade to discuss this matter. The Yugoslav mine action center has been operational since April 2002.

IV. Matters of a thematic nature related to implementation: Safety and storage of stockpile destruction

Hans-Peter Walker from the Swiss Defense Procurement Agency gave a presentation on general principles and measures with respect to the safe and secure storage of AP mines and ammunition. Bob Scott of Munitions Consultants (United Kingdom) presented an assessment of a recent incident in Lagos, Nigeria where improperly stockpiled munitions led to the destruction and devastation of an ammunition storage depot and of the surrounding populated areas. Harold Lockwood (Aguaconsult) analysed the humanitarian impact of the Lagos incident. Nigeria welcomed the discussion of the Lagos incident and thought that the presentation by Hans Peter Walker would be useful for Nigeria.

Major General Gitti Suksumstarn (Thailand) gave a presentation of a recent stockpile explosion in his country, which led to casualties and destruction of over 48,688 AP mines.

Ms. Dominique Munoz, Etablissement de Bourges, presented the various measures and methods which France uses for the management and use of its approximately 5,000 AP mines for training and research purposes.

The Co-Chairs expressed the opinion that discussion of the issue is important: firstly, because limited stockpiles kept for training need to be carefully stored, and secondly, because many States considering joining the Convention have very large stockpiles. The incidents in Nigeria and Thailand show how important it is to carefully plan the safe storage of these stockpiles.

V. Update on Assistance and Cooperation

The Co-Chairs stated that with deadlines fast approaching it was timely to focus on those with pressing needs and deadlines. They acknowledged the useful work particularly of Canada and NAMSA in Europe, and the OAS in the Americas, and discussions within ASEAN in Asia. Moreover, the Co-Chairs suggested that Article 7 Reports might be a useful tool for providing more detailed information on stockpile destruction programs and for seeking or offering technical assistance.

Dijana Plestina from Croatia gave an update on the work of the Reay Group of the Stability Pact in the field of stockpile destruction. She stressed that the Reay Group offered an excellent example of a regional mechanism that was assisting states to fulfill their Convention obligations, including their stockpile destruction obligations.

Belgium proposed that States Parties could use the Article 7 reporting format's "Form B" and "Form F" to provide more detailed information on their destruction programs and to indicate specific technical and other needs for the completion of their stockpile destruction. In addition, Belgium noted that potential donor countries could use "Form J" to indicate specific expertise and technical advice that they are willing to share with other countries.

Kerry Brinkert (ISU) indicated that the Implementation Support Unit was able to direct requesting parties to various sources of assistance. With respect to database tools he noted that the United Nations has already developed an excellent electronic information source on stockpile destruction. With respect to the database tools of the United Nations, Martin Barber (UNMAS) said that its web site is currently being updated and will be available with new functions and more comprehensive information on stockpile destruction in about six weeks time.

With respect to technical cooperation and assistance in Africa, Fabrice Delaitre (GICHD) indicated that on the basis of information available to him, Guinea and Niger are not likely to have stocks while Djibouti apparently has several thousand AP mines in stock. Djibouti would destroy its stockpile by March 2003, but Mr. Delaitre recommended that States Parties contact Djibouti and discuss whether assistance is needed.

Roman Hunger (Switzerland) informed the SCSD that an AP Mine Destruction Management Training Course for French speaking specialists will be held in Martigny, Switzerland, June 3-7, 2002. The course will offer training for experts who are involved in their respective national management destruction programs.

Colonel William McDonough (OAS) gave an update on the mine destruction project in Central America. He noted that within a few months the destruction goal set by the Managua Challenge would be successfully met. In particular he thanked Canada for providing additional funding to ensure the full completion of the program in March 2003. He expressed his hope that the Managua Challenge, which had assisted in the destruction of over 500,000 AP mines, could become a model of cooperation for other regions facing similar tasks.

Mr. Stephen Brown (NAMSA) gave a presentation on industrial disposal of AP mines and other types of ammunition. For large stockpiles there is often no environmentally and economically acceptable alternative to industrial disposal and recycling of precious materials and substances for civilian purposes. He mentioned in this context the successful conclusion of the stockpile destruction program in Albania and he elaborated on future programs in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

Mr. Paddy Blagden (GICHD) delivered a presentation on the basic elements, rules and techniques of stockpile destruction. He pointed out that stockpile destruction is often more economically efficient and safer than storing old ammunition and propellants that degrade rapidly.

VI. Co-Chairs' Assessment of Needs that Remain

The Co-Chairs expressed their satisfaction with the progress made since the January meeting towards meeting pressing stockpile destruction deadlines. While noting that the overall situation for 2003 is relatively positive, the Co-Chairs indicated a need to focus on five or six

States Parties that may not meet their 2003 deadlines. The Co-Chairs expressed their intention to convene an informal contact group of interested States on the margins of the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties to help coordinate a dialogue on possible assistance for those States Parties with potential problems particularly in 2003.

The Co-Chairs welcomed participation by Greece and Turkey, which have indicated that they will join the Convention soon. The Co-Chairs also welcomed the statements made by the Republic of Belarus and the Ukraine on the level of their national AP mine stockpiles.