

STANDING COMMITTEE ON STOCKPILE DESTRUCTION

Meeting Report 11 - 12 May 2006

I. Introduction

Pursuant to the decisions of the 2004 First Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the 2005 Sixth Meeting of the States Parties (6MSP), the Meeting of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction was convened in Geneva by its Co-Chairs, Ambassador Yoshiki Mine of Japan and Ambassador Matern Y. Lumbanga of the United Republic of Tanzania, with the support of its Co-Rapporteurs, Mr. Hamza Khelif of Algeria and Ms Ingrid Kressel of Estonia.

In accordance to the Article 4 of the Convention, based on the relevant actions of the Nairobi Action Plan agreed upon at the First Review Conference (actions 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 51 and 54), and in the light of the priorities identified at the 6MSP, the Co-Chairs structured a programme for the meeting which featured an opportunity for updates by the States Parties which are in the process of destroying stockpiled anti-personnel mines and those which have recently achieved their destruction programmes, updates by relevant States Parties on transparency measures under the Article 7 of the Convention, updates on cooperation and assistance and discussions on specific thematic issues related to stockpile destruction.

II. Overview of the status of stockpile destruction

The Co-Chairs provided an overview of the general status of implementation of Article 4 of the Convention. They noted that, since the First Review Conference, five State Parties (Algeria, Bangladesh, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Uruguay) declared completing implementation of Article 4 and that three States that have indicated that they possess stockpiles have joined the Convention (Ethiopia, Latvia and Ukraine). The Co-Chairs reported that 137 States Parties, representing 70 per cent of the world's States, no longer hold stockpiled anti-personnel mines and that together the States Parties have destroyed over of 38 million mines.

The Co-Chairs noted that while the number of States Parties for which stockpile destruction remains relevant has been reduced to 14, several challenges remain:

- Some States Parties emerging from several years of conflict face the challenge of ascertaining the extent to which stockpiled anti-personnel mines exist in areas under their jurisdiction.
- For two States Parties, the destruction of PFM-1 mines remains a challenge.
- Some States Parties that have achieved a high state of economic development face the challenge to destroy their stocks "as soon as possible.";
- For some States Parties the matter of clarifying the status of affairs concerning stockpiled anti-personnel mines through an initial Article 7 report remains an outstanding issue.

The Co-Chairs expressed their hope that by the end of 2006 the Democratic Republic of Congo would have fulfilled its Article 4 obligations within by its deadline, that States Parties with relatively high level of development will have shown leadership by destroying their stockpiles as soon as possible, that other States Parties with Article 4 obligations will have a

clear implementation plan in place, and, that all States Parties will have reported on their stockpile status as required under Article 7.

Mr. Steve Goose of the ICBL presented a non-governmental point of view on progress made in destroying stockpiles. He expressed lingering concerns over the lack of initial Article 7 reports, particularly from Equatorial Guinea and Cape Verde which have passed their destruction deadlines (1 March 2003 and 1 November 2005 respectively). He also expressed concern regarding whether the Democratic Republic of Congo can meet its stockpile destruction deadline of 1 November 2006.

Concerning the problem of stockpiles discovered after the completion of destruction, as occurred in several States Parties, Mr. Goose noted that this is an issue that the Standing Committee needs to address. Related to this matter, Mr. Goose suggested that Form G of the Article 7 reporting format be amended to contain a section on the destruction of newly captured, seized, or otherwise obtained stockpiled anti-personnel mines.

Mr. Goose also noted that other matters of interest include the destruction of PFM and Artillery Delivered Anti-Personnel Mines (ADAM), the need to not duplicate reporting by avoiding repeating information in both Form B and Form D of the Article 7 reporting format, and, greater transparency and technical understanding with respect to Claymore-type munitions, OZM-72 mines and multipurpose fuses.

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

Updates were provided by one State Party which recently completed its stockpile destruction programme, and by States Parties in the process of destroying their stocks.

A. State Party which has recently completed stockpile destruction

Algeria declared having completed the destruction of 150,050 stockpiled anti-personnel mines six months before its deadline with the destruction of last 3,030 mines realized on 21 November 2005. It was noted that the first public stockpile destruction ceremony on 24 November 2004 and the last stockpile destruction event were held under the auspices of H.E Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the Republic of Algeria, with the participation of Algerian officials, international observers and non-governmental organizations, showing the high priority that Algeria places on compliance with the norms of international humanitarian law and disarmament principles. Twelve phased destruction operations in appropriate sites took place in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and applicable environmental environment standards.

B. States Parties in the process of destroying stocks

Deadlines in 2006

The **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** reported that when it became State Party there were a number of armed groups operating in its territory which possessed stockpiles of anti-personnel mines. Since then the DRC has made efforts to find, take control and destroy stockpiles in its territory. The DRC informed that while it has not likely discovered all stockpiles on its territory, it has recovered and destroyed 2,864 stockpiled anti-personnel mines previously held by armed groups (in addition to having destroyed stockpiles held by the armed forces).

Deadlines in 2007

Afghanistan declared that since acceding to the Convention, 65,973 mines have been destroyed with 44,819 stockpiled mines having been destroyed since the beginning of 2005. An ammunition steering committee has been formed, chaired by the Minister of Defence, and it has begun a nationwide survey that includes identifying stockpiles in the country. Afghanistan reaffirmed its commitment to fulfil its stockpile destruction obligations by March 2007, but noted that a challenge it faces is the need for local commanders and villagers to voluntarily give up their stockpiled caches or to disclose the locations of them. Afghanistan also noted that in March of this year a huge stockpile of weapons was found which included 15,000 anti-personnel mines.

Angola gave an overview of its stockpile destruction programme which is jointly financed by the European Commission (85%), the Government of Angola (10%) and the UNDP (5%). Attention was drawn to the fact that stockpiled anti-personnel mines are often in the areas that are densely mined and are difficult to access. Angola indicated that it may require a short extension period on its deadline. In response, the ICBL pointed out that the Convention does not permit this option and thus States Parties are under the obligation to destroy the stockpiles under their control by deadline.

Cyprus declared that 44,548 anti-personnel mines will be destroyed by July 2007: 11,000 in 2005; 18,000 in 2006; and, 15,548 in 2007.

Deadlines in 2008

Belarus reported that in February 2006 Belarus and the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA) Purchase Order (Contract) on the Destruction of TNT-containing POMZ-2, POMZ-2M, POM-2 PMN and PMN-2-series anti-personnel mines. On 1 March 2006 the destruction phase was launched with funding provided by Canada and Lithuania through a NATO Partnership for Peace Programme trust fund. TNT-containing PMN (45,425 pieces), PMN-2 (114,384 pieces), and POM-2 (57,324 pieces) mines will be destroyed by detonation and POMZ-2 (12,799 pieces) and POMZ-2M (64,843 pieces) mines will be destroyed by moulding their cases. The destruction is being verified by the NAMSA auditor. Additionally the Contract envisages the NAMSA auditor inspecting MON-series (5,536 pieces – 5% of the total amount) and OZM-72 (200,826 pieces – 100%) mines, in the course of which auxiliary parts (designed for victim activation) are removed and destroyed. Belarus further reported that this programme to destroy TNT-containing anti-personnel mines should be completed in 2006.

As of 6 May 2006, 131 MON-type mines were inspected and auxiliary parts were extracted from 12,515 OZM-72 mines; 14 159 POMZ-2 mines were destroyed by moulding; and, 4,450 PMN mines and 16 POM-2 mines were destroyed by detonation.

To destroy 3,371,984 PFM-1 cluster mines containing a liquid explosive, Belarus signed a Statement of Endorsement to accept the European Commission's technical assistance.

Turkey reported that there are 2,979,165 anti-personnel mines in stock, out of which 1,741,684 are M2, 43,853 are M16, 1,005,461 are M14 and 18,236 are M18 Claymore mines. Turkey noted that this total is different than that reported in 2005 (i.e., 2,973,481) because new counts were carried out and also because Artillery Delivered AP Mines

(ADAM) were added to stockpile figures for the first time. The number of ADAM mines was quantified as 22,788 and by multiplying 633 munitions with 36 sub-munitions in each. Turkey reported that a company has been awarded a contract for a disposal facility and an agreement was signed between NAMSA and this company on 20 December 2005. This facility will be established using Turkey's own resources. Efforts are continuing to get the facility functioning by July 2007 so that stockpiled mines can be destroyed of by the 1 March 2008 deadline. Turkey also informed that victim activation components of M18 Claymore mines are added to list of mines to be destroyed.

Deadlines in 2009 and beyond

Ukraine emphasised the challenge it faces in destroying PFM mines, particularly that it needs appropriate technology and financial means. It stated that 5.9 million PFM mines will be destroyed with financial contributions from donors.

Latvia (reporting during the meeting of the Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention on 8 May 2006) indicated that it possesses 2,910 PMN 2 and 881 OZM-4 mines. Latvia reported that stockpiles would be destroyed during 2006 with 1,301 mines (420 PMN-2 and 881 OZM-4) retained for permitted reasons.

C. Status of transparency reporting

The Co-Chairs noted that transparency reporting as it concerns stockpile destruction is a matter that is relevant for those States Parties which have not yet provided an initial article 7 report as required – Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guyana, and Sao Tome and Principe. In addition it is relevant for those States Parties with upcoming deadlines for providing an initial report, including Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cook Islands, Haiti and Vanuatu. The Co-Chairs provided an opportunity for States Parties that have not yet reported their stockpile status in their Article 7 transparency reports as required to give updates. No State Party took the floor during this agenda item.

IV. Updates on resource mobilization, co-operation and assistance

Argentina expressed its availability to offer assistance within the framework of the Convention to States Parties in need of experts and technologies.

Canada reported that since 2000 it has provided a combination of technical expertise, material, equipment and financial support for stockpile destruction, either on a bilateral basis or in cooperation with different partners. It has assisted 22 States Parties in destroying more than 6.25 million stockpiled mines at a cost to Canada of almost CDN\$ 7.5 million. Canada drew particular attention to the project that is underway in Afghanistan to assist Afghanistan in meeting its Article 4 obligations. Since the First Review Conference Canada has assisted or is in the process of assisting 6 States Parties at a cost of more than CDN\$ 5.5 million dollars. In addition, Canada is supporting technical efforts in cooperation with European Union and Commission since 1999 to find solutions to destroy PFM mines both in Ukraine and hopefully soon in Belarus.

In relation to possible regulatory difficulties faced by certain countries concerning stockpile destruction, Canada was encouraged that the Development Co-operation Directorate of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has reaffirmed that stockpile destruction activities can be recognized as Official Development Assistance (ODA).

In conclusion, Canada encouraged all States “in position to do so” to provide assistance to other States Parties, particularly to developing ones, to comply with Article 4 obligations.

V. Matters of a thematic nature related to stockpile destruction

A. Experiences related to stockpiles not under the control of a State Party

The **Geneva Call** reported that 28 armed non-State actors have signed its *Deed of Commitment for Adherence to a Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Mines and for Cooperation in Mine Action*, that 11 of these have declared holding stockpiles and that one of these in Western Sahara destroyed 3,321 mines in March 2006.

B. PFM destruction

Belarus made a presentation on PFM-1 mine destruction technologies, noting that destroying PFM mines by burning or blasting them produces enormous amounts of harmful substances. The Belarusian company *Stroyenergo* supported by the National Academy of Sciences designed, developed, tested and offered for practical use the *Spider* unit which uses a new plasma chemical technology for the destruction of PFM mines. This technology is ecologically proven and provides a very high capacity rate. The capacity of two *Spider* units is 920 mines per hour or 13,480 mines a day. In the case of destruction of PFM mines in Belarus it would take 250 working days.

VI. Concluding remarks

In their concluding remarks the Co-Chairs acknowledged that during the Standing Committee meeting there was a good review of and quality updates were provided on the stockpile destruction process, with nine States Parties sharing information during the meeting of the Standing Committee of Stockpile Destruction or during other Standing Committee meetings. It was clear that none of the State Parties with Article 4 obligation is in non-compliance. However, there are still significant challenges facing several States Parties, including problems of identifying stockpiles under their jurisdiction.

The Co-Chairs listed the following issues as important for the successful implementation of stockpile destruction in 2006:

- The Democratic Republic of Congo is expected to meet its November 1, 2006 deadline;
- Developed States Parties with stockpiles should show leadership and good example by destroying their stockpiles before their deadlines;
- Other States Parties should have a clear destruction plan in place by the end of the year 2006;
- All States Parties should submit their article 7 report; and,
- The question of stockpiles under the control of armed non-state actors should be further investigated.