

AP Mine Ban Convention

Intersessional Meetings of the Standing Committees 2009

Update from Norway, Coordinator of the Resource Utilisation Contact Group

*Check against delivery*

29 May 2009

Thank you Mr Co Chair

The Resource Utilisation Contact Group is an arena for promoting new thinking on how best to identify, mobilise and utilize the resources needed to implement the obligations of the Convention.

Over the years, the Contact Group has convened discussions both within and outside the formal Convention work program with a focus on practitioner's perspective on implementation of the core obligations of the convention.

A concrete output of the work was the discussion paper *applying all available methods to achieve the full, efficient and expedient implementation of Article 5* presented to the 9MSP. This proposal emerged from several multistakeholder consultations in the Contact Group, in cooperation with the 2008 co-chairs for mine clearance and the ISU. The discussion paper contained a set of recommendations on how to improve Article 5 implementation. These recommendations were accepted by the Meeting of states parties and included in the final report.

The recommendations included recognition by States Parties of the three main actions available to assess and, where applicable, release land that previously had been identified and reported as mined. These three main actions are: by non-technical means, technical survey and clearance.

The adoption of the recommendations concluded informal and formal discussions over more than three years on how states parties with Article 5 obligations could meet these as soon as possible, in an efficient and effective manner.

The recommendations adopted in 2008 ensured that States Parties acknowledged practices developed by mine action operators over many years as acceptable ways to tackle suspected mined areas, as long as these were undertaken in accordance with established international and national procedures.

At the meeting in the contact group this week, representatives from mine action NGOs; national authorities and the United Nations presented their experiences on how the recommendations are being applied now, and challenges ahead. The contact group also got an update on the status of the relevant IMAS on survey and land release, which has been under development for some time now.

The recommendations are commonly known as “land release”, but it is important for us to recognise that this is a term that is not standardised and that not have a commonly shared definition. Contact group discussions showed the importance of separating between land release as a policy and land release as a specific operational procedure.

The recommendations adopted by states parties in 2008 were relevant for the policy level. They provide states parties with a guide to steps they can and should take to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their national programs to implement Article 5, while remaining within practices accepted by all States Parties.

The contact group heard how both mine action ngos and some national authorities, even in the absence of a new international mine action standard on the issue, already have integrated the recommendations in their work, and why this have been crucial to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations.

The contact group also heard forceful statements on why it is important to ensure that land release principles are integrated into national policies and national regulatory frameworks. This is a process that must go parallel to and in interaction with further technical operational development of land release. The new International standards form a key part of this, and both NGOs and States Parties present at the contact group meeting stressed the urgency of having the IMAS on land release finalised as soon as possible.

A key message from the contact group to this plenary is that application of the land release recommendations adopted by 9MSP remains crucial to ensure speedy and safe implementation of Article 5 obligations, and that all actors need to take their part of the responsibility to make this happen.

The Contact group will continue to pursue the application of the recommendations, in cooperation with the co-chairs, the ISU, the UN, the GICHD, national authorities and the NGOs.

Thank you, Mr Co-chair