

Strengthening International Cooperation and Assistance in support of implementation of the Landmine Convention.

Presentation of paper, Norway

*Check Against Delivery*

Thank you Mr. President

Thank you for this opportunity to present the paper on Strengthening International Cooperation and Assistance in support of Mine Action and implementation of the Convention.

Last year, at the Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World, all key implementation actors called for a strengthened focus on International Cooperation and Assistance and the implementation of Article 6. While the question of how to match needs with resources had been part of our agendas in various forms both in formal and informal meetings of the Convention, many of us felt the need to address the issues in a systematic and concerted manner.

When we developed the Cartagena Action Plan last year, we reflected the demand for more emphasis on Article 6, with a new separate section on cooperation and assistance. So when the action plan was adopted last year, all States Parties (and I quote) "...recognized that fulfilling their obligations will require sustained substantial political, financial and material commitments, provided both through national commitments and international, regional and bilateral cooperation and assistance, in accordance with the obligations under Article 6." The nineteen actions in the section describe steps all States Parties and other relevant implementation actors should take to implement the Convention.

Norway had cooperation and assistance as one of our main priorities during our presidency. In cooperation with the Co-chairs we prepared and led the special session on this issue during the intersessional meetings. The preparation included the development of two thematic papers, one on victim assistance and one on mine clearance. They presented the core issues and formulated questions. I am happy to see that these questions form the basis of our discussion today.

Our main conclusion following the special session is that there is a need to continue our discussion on the substantive issues raised in the papers and during the 25 June discussion. We, states parties, the UN, the ICRC and the NGOs need to continuously question the way we conduct our work and take concrete steps to improve our performance. We must consider all measures to ensure sufficient and adequate financial, technical and human resources for all aspects of mine action, as well as actions we can take to improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of our work.

Ensuring adequate financial resources for mine action is a key aspect of cooperation and assistance, but definitely not the only one. We know that the mine action sector has been fairly well funded over the past decade and when we see how much work that remain we must look hard at other ways to improve our performance. In our view all states parties are in a position to support implementation of the Convention in one way or another. We need our discussions on cooperation and assistance to unleash that potential.

Mr President.

Since Cartagena we have worked hard to develop further the agenda on cooperation and assistance, with the strong support from the co-chairs, the UN, ICRC, ICBL and of course the ISU. In our paper we have presented some substantive issues we believe should be discussed further in a systematic and informed manner in our formal and informal meetings. We believe that establishing a new Standing Committee on cooperation and assistance will be the best way forward, and hence warmly welcome the proposal by Zambia. Norway will continue to support this work in the years to come, and we look forward to our discussion this morning.

Thank you, Mr President