

Statement of Slovenia Enhancing Cooperation and Assistance

Mr. President, since it is the first time that my delegation is asking for the floor, allow me to congratulate you for your election to the post of the president of 10 Meeting of States Parties. We remain at disposal to you and your team to assist you in your efforts during this MSP and in the course of next year. We would also like to thank the delegation of Norway and Ambassador Susan Eckey for taking the cooperation and assistance as a "leit motif" to the helm of the Norwegian Presidency. We thank you Mr. President, Norway and Zambia for the papers prepared to steer our today's discussion.

Slovenia is committed to support international efforts in assisting mine and other explosive remains of war affected countries. In March 1998 Slovenian government established the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF) that assisted many countries of our region and elsewhere in the world and raised more than 300 millions dollars. Slovenia also contributed 8 million dollars to the ITF in last decade and will continue to do so in the future as well.

Art. VI - cooperation and assistance lies at heart of the Convention, since it brings hope to the people on the ground and makes the difference in their lives. Assistance to affected countries has important role in overall implementation of the Convention and will be needed until there is a last affected country in the world. The international community has to keep present level of assistance despite present economic and financial crisis. That is why we in Slovenia are trying to handle the situation and keep the same level of our commitment despite the crisis that ravaged our economy in the course of last two years.

International cooperation and assistance must be above all well targeted, coherent, sustainable, long term-oriented, concerted and coordinated with other donors and affected state as well. That is why effective national ownership is so important. That was always important prerequisite that we demanded in our work with affected countries through the ITF. A basis for that are constant political support and administrative independence and sustainability of national ownership. We agree with the ICRC that that fully functioning coordinating body of the affected country is not only useful but also indispensable.

Mr. President, allow me also to make some comments on the proposal of Zambia to establish new Standing Committee for Cooperation and Assistance.

Slovenia thanks and commends Zambia for its proposal to establish new Standing committee. This proposal is very important, since - if adopted - it will change a Convention internal structure for the very first time since its creation around ten years ago. This change will bring something new in the life of the Convention. That is why we were a bit prudent at the beginning of this discussion during intersessional work. We attach great deal of importance to today's discussion.

New Standing Committee should steer exchange of views and information between states parties - donors and affected countries in need and should in our view include other stakeholders such as NGOs, international organizations, victims and other representatives of donors such as international financial institutions and private donors. In this context we see proposal of Canada to invite non-states parties that are parties of other conventions valuable and first step towards better use of synergies between various international conventions. That is why Slovenia supports proposal of Canada.

In this regard we also see connection between this Standing committee and requests by some States parties for extension deadline to clear and demine mine areas according the article V of the Convention. In the discussions of the analysis group in the course of last

two years, we noted that many affected countries have been less exposed to the attention of donors. That is one of important reasons for requests to extend the deadline in the case of many affected States parties. We see one of the roles of the new Standing Committee exactly here - to enable countries with little assistance to offer opportunity to contact with donors for assistance. It goes without saying that this will enable more assistance to States parties that need assistance to destroy their stockpiles as was pointed earlier by Ireland.

Mr. President, like often in real life it is not about the institutions to do something, but about the people who represent them and their will. The success of this new Standing Committee will depend also on us, representatives of States Parties, on how we will know to use this opportunity. We are convinced that we can size this opportunity and make another step on our way toward the world free of anti-personnel mines.

I thank you Mr. President.