

**ICRC intervention on “experimental sessions” at the Intersessional Meetings  
11th Meeting of the State Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

**Thursday 1 December 2011**

At the 2011 June Intersessional meetings, the ICRC was able to participate in the “experimental sessions” covering three distinct topics: clearance, victim assistance and national implementation measures under Article 9. Overall, we had a very positive impression of these three sessions and believe this initiative should be continued in future.

We observed that the smaller-group format provided a collegial atmosphere and a useful exchange of experiences between country delegations and other actors. We also note that the feedback provided by participants was almost universally positive, although constructive suggestions were also put forward.

The ICRC presented in the session on Article 9 and was very pleased with this session. In this informal and interactive set-up, delegations were able to learn from the experiences of others that have reflected on their Article 9 obligations and decided to adopt specific implementing legislation.

Some aspects of these sessions could, of course, be improved in the future. In particular, the format could be adapted to make the discussions even less formal and more interactive, more clearly distinguishing them from the reporting done in plenary. The sessions could also be more valuable to participants if they focused less on discussion of achievements and more on the specific challenges States face in implementing their obligations under the Convention. How they have overcome those challenges, or could do so in future, would be useful points for discussion. In addition, increased participation from capital-based State representatives could improve the depth of the discussions as well as the dissemination of the outcomes back to capital. Some technical issues also need to be examined.

Many of these suggestions were echoed in the feedback provided by participants. The ICRC supports the proposal, expressed by several delegations, to increase the time allocated to each session, to enable more in-depth discussion and sharing of experiences. We also note that several delegations expressed a desire for advance notice of the proposed content of the discussions to help them better prepare to actively participate in the sessions in future.

In our view, all of the Standing Committees could benefit from these more interactive discussions - except perhaps for stockpile destruction, which currently only concerns a limited number of States Parties. An in-depth discussion on resources and cooperation, for example, could provide concrete ideas to assist the Standing Committee on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance in its work.

We consider it especially important to continue informal and focused discussions on national contexts for Victim Assistance. This would enable more in-depth reflection on the steps outlined in the *Cartagena Action Plan*, and in particular on the implementation of national plans of action. With the participation of supporting organizations and donor States, those States responsible for a significant number of survivors could use these sessions to identify challenges to translating national action plans into tangible improvements in the quality and quantity of services for landmine survivors, and discuss possible solutions to these challenges.

The ICRC is happy to assist the Coordinating Committee with the planning of these sessions in future and we look forward to continuing to work to ensure that the Intersessional meetings are as useful as possible for all States attending.