
Fifth Meeting
Bangkok, 15-19 September 2003
Item 15 of the provisional agenda

STANDING COMMITTEE ON STOCKPILE DESTRUCTION

Final Report* 2002-2003

I. Introduction

1. The Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction, established in accordance with the decisions and recommendations of the Meetings of the States Parties, met in Geneva on 6 February 2003 and 15 May 2003. These meetings were convened by the Standing Committee's Co-Chairs, Mr. René Haug of Switzerland and Mr. Radu Horumba of Romania, with the support of its Co-Rapporteurs, Mr. Luigi Scotto of Italy and Mr. Carlos J. Arroyave of Guatemala.
2. Representatives of more than 90 States Parties, 30 States not Parties, the United Nations, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and numerous other international and non-governmental organizations participated in the work of the Standing Committee. The meetings were held in Geneva with the support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). Interpretation was provided thanks to the support of the European Commission.
3. In accordance with the President's Action Programme of the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties (4MSP), the Standing Committee focused its attention on: States Parties with a deadline for stockpile destruction in 2003; bilateral and regional assistance and co-operation in the area of stockpile destruction; and technical aspects related to the implementation of stockpile destruction obligations.

II. Overview of the Status of Implementation

4. The Standing Committee attached great importance to that fact in 2003 the first deadlines for the stockpile destruction occurred, particularly with a view to ensuring that all States Parties could comply with this important obligation. It was highlighted with great satisfaction that all State Parties with a 2003 deadline indicated that they will comply with this obligation and will no longer possess anti-personnel mines stockpiles beyond their respective deadlines. **The**

* This report has been submitted by the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee, Switzerland and Romania. This report is the Co-Chairs' summary of the breadth of work undertaken by the Standing Committee during the 2002-2003 Intersessional period. It remains the responsibility of the Co-Chairs and is not a negotiated document.

exchange of information on the completion of stockpile destruction was the most significant part of the Standing Committee meetings.

5. By the end of the May 2003 meeting of the Standing Committee, the following 16 States Parties declared that they had completed their stockpile destruction since the 4MSP: **Brazil, Chad, Croatia, Djibouti, El Salvador, Italy, Japan, Jordan, the Netherlands, Moldova, Mozambique, Portugal, Slovenia, Thailand, Turkmenistan, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.** In addition, **Uganda** indicated that it will be able to meet its 1 August 2003 deadline with international help and assistance and **Venezuela** indicated that it would destroy its stockpiles prior to the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties (5MSP).

6. With respect to **Guinea**, which had a 1 April 2003 deadline, the Co-Chairs noted that no official information had been obtained concerning the existence of stockpiled anti-personnel mines by that country. The Co-Chairs also noted that while it is assumed that **Barbados, Equatorial Guinea, Namibia** and the **Solomon Islands** do not have stockpiles, these States Parties have not yet provided an Article 7 report to indicate this.

7. Several States Parties indicated that they carried out the final part of the destruction of their anti-personnel mines in the presence of ministers, representatives of other States Parties and international and non-governmental organizations, and national and international media. The Co-Chairs commended these States Parties for ensuring transparency and allowing for verification of their destruction programmes and invited other States Parties with future deadlines to do the same.

8. The following 14 States Parties with deadlines in 2004 and beyond gave updates on their stockpile destruction programmes: **Argentina, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Chile, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Romania, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uruguay** and **Zambia.** In addition, 3 States not Parties to the Convention made statements concerning stockpile destruction, **Belarus, Ukraine, and Serbia and Montenegro,** as did one armed non-state actor from **Somalia.** This information from States not Party to the Convention was warmly welcomed, particularly information which also outlined plans to accede to the Convention in due course.

9. The ICBL gave overviews of the global situation regarding stockpile destruction, noting: that approximately 30 million antipersonnel mines have been destroyed so far by the States Parties; and, that as of May 2003, 46 States Parties had completed their destruction, 10 States Parties were in the process of destroying their stockpiles, and 8 other States Parties had yet to commence their stockpile destruction programmes. In addition, it was noted that 15 States Parties have yet to submit Article 7 reports confirming the presence or the absence of stockpiled anti-personnel mines.

10. The Co-Chairs distributed a chart presenting an up-to-date picture of the status of stockpile destruction. The Co-Chairs and Co-Rapporteurs will continue to update and circulate revised versions of this chart, including at the 5MSP. This chart is also available on the GICHD website.

III. Update on assistance and cooperation

11. The Co-Chairs commended national and international efforts to assist States Parties and other countries in fulfilling the Convention's obligations in the area of stockpile destruction.

During the meetings of the Standing Committee, the following States Parties and organizations gave an update on, or mentioned in their presentations, on-going assistance efforts with respect to stockpile destruction: **Canada, France, Portugal, the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA), the European Commission (EC), the Organization of American States, the Reay Group of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the GICHD.** In addition, **Italy, Japan, Jordan and Thailand** noted their willingness to assist other countries in stockpile destruction with equipment, know-how and trained personnel.

12. The following States Parties requested international assistance and financial support for their stockpile destruction activities: **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Uganda, Senegal, and Tajikistan.** The following States not Parties the same: **Belarus, Serbia and Montenegro, and Ukraine.**

13. At the request of the Co-Chairs, the Standing Committee was briefed on the challenges posed by the destruction of large stocks of PFM-type mines in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union and on the safety risks posed by specific construction features and toxic substances that PFM mines contain. Two States not Parties to the Convention which possess large stockpiles of these mines, **Ukraine and Belarus,** stressed that without assistance they would have difficulty destroying their stockpiles and that this impeded their ratification of, or accession to, the Convention.

14. **Bulgaria, the GICHD, Ukraine, and the EC** provided updates on the technical and environmental challenges of transporting and destroying PFM and PMN landmines. **Canada, the EC, NAMSA, the UNDP, and the GICHD** provided updates on on-going assistance efforts with respect to the destruction of these mines. These updates highlighted the risks of continued storage and the explosive degradation of such mines as they approach the end of their shelf-life. In addition, it was highlighted that there is a need to develop a comprehensive funding and technology approach for the destruction these mines. The **ICRC** reported on a seminar in Kiev, where among others issues, the destruction of PFM mines was noted as a major impediment for the ratification of the Convention.

IV. Matters of a thematic nature related to destruction and post-destruction activities

A. "E-mine" website

15. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) provided an update on its "e-mine" web site (www.mineaction.org), which now includes new functions and more comprehensive information on stockpile destruction in various countries.

B. Correct Use of Form B and Form D of Article 7 Reports

16. It was noted that in some cases States Parties have entered the same information on stockpiled anti-personnel mines under Forms B and D of their Article 7 reports, suggesting that they have stockpiles of anti-personnel mines even though they have fulfilled their obligations under Article 4 (Note: Form B corresponds to stockpiled anti-personnel mines whereas Form D corresponds to anti-personnel mines retained for the development of and training in various activities noted in Article 3.) The United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs clarified that reports in Form D regarding the number of anti-personnel mines retained in accordance with Article 3 should not be

included in the number of mines still stockpiled as reported in Form B.

C. Preservation of information and data on stockpile destruction

17. The Co-Chairs recommended in their February 2003 "food-for thought" paper that information, data and lessons learned with respect to stockpile destruction programmes should be preserved and safeguarded. In this respect the Standing Committee appreciated the offer by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) to serve as a depository for such information and data. As result of the efforts of the ISU in this area, a bibliography on stockpile destruction sources can be presented at the 5MSP.

D. Contact Group

18. The Co-Chairs and Co-Rapporteurs decided that, considering the excellent compliance with stockpile destruction deadlines in 2003, meetings of a contact group on stockpile destruction would only be warranted should a need arise related to difficulties of one or more States Parties in meeting their Article 4 obligations.

E. Declaration and destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines discovered after the completion of stockpiles destruction

19. In their "food-for thought" paper, the Co-Chairs raised the issue of a possible discovery of formerly unknown stockpiles. Although the importance of this issue was acknowledged, discussions on this matter were inconclusive.

V. An assessment of needs that remain

20. The Standing Committee in 2003 marked impressive progress with respect to meeting the obligations outlined in Article 4 of the Convention and with respect to efforts of States Parties to cooperate and assist each other in stockpile destruction. Excellent compliance with the destruction deadlines during 2003 has become one of the Convention's success stories.

A. Follow-up in 2003-2004

21. While during 2003 it appears that all States Parties with stockpile destruction deadlines fulfilled their Article 4 obligations, there is a need to continue to carefully monitor implementation of the article to identify, in a timely manner, possible assistance needs of a few cases that may have difficulty in meeting future deadlines. There is a need to be vigilant and to make every effort to uphold the so far flawless compliance record. A flawless compliance record in 2004 not only will strengthen the Convention further but also will provide an important input to the First Review Conference in 2004. With these factors in mind, the Co-Chairs recommend the following actions in 2003-2004:

- 21.1. That the Standing Committee give increased attention to those States Parties with stockpile destruction deadlines between end of the 5MSP and the First Review Conference;

- 21.2. That States Parties whose deadlines fall within the period leading to the First Review Conference provide updates to the Standing Committee and Co-Chairs on their plans and progress, and communicate any needs for assistance at their earliest convenience;
- 21.3. That States Parties whose deadlines fall in 2005 and beyond complete, if possible, their stockpile destruction before the First Review Conference;
- 21.4. That, to promote transparency, strengthen the Convention and support universalization efforts, States Parties complete their final destruction events in the presence of representatives of other States Parties and international and non-governmental organizations, and national and international media;
- 21.5. That States Parties and international and regional organisations continue to provide assistance in the area of stockpile destruction assistance; and,
- 21.6. That an emphasis continue to be placed on the destruction of PFM mines with a view to ensuring the formal acceptance, by the time of the Review Conference, by those States for which this continues to be an issue.

B. Follow-up on thematic issues related to destruction and post-destruction activities

22. The Standing Committee in 2002-2003 discussed various broader thematic areas that warrant follow-up over the next year. The Co-Chairs thus recommend the following:

- 22.1. That States Parties and international and non-governmental organisations use the UNMAS "E-mine" website to share and access information on stockpile destruction;
 - 22.2. That States Parties provide information and data on national stockpile destruction programmes, destruction technologies, national policies and case studies to the Implementation Support Unit in its role as a depository for such information and data;
 - 22.3. That, in their Article 7 reports, States Parties indicate the number of anti-personnel mines retained in accordance with Article 3 only in Form D; and,
 - 22.4. That the Co-Chairs convene a meeting of the Contact Group on stockpile destruction at their convenience whenever needs arise to discuss difficulties faced by one or more States Parties in fulfilling Article 4 obligations.
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