

**Informal Consultations on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Related Technologies  
of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of  
Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.**

Bangkok, 15 - 19 September 2003

Intervention, by Co-Chairs Sara Sekkenes - NPA and Hakimi Mohammad Shobab – MDC, on behalf  
of the Mine Action Working Group - MAWG of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines -  
ICBL.

**Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Please let me congratulate State Parties on remarkable achievements and progress in striving to meet obligations of the Convention as regards to Article 5. Among positive findings we can extract from the *Landmine Monitor Report 2003* that:

- An increased number of countries are reporting of organised mine clearance programs,
- Systems and structures for coordination of mine action were established in a number of countries,
- More land has been cleared in terms of sqmtrs, and has been handed over to civil society for utilisation in the pursue and process of development and normalisation of life and livelihood in mine affected areas,
- Increased number of countries reporting on the inclusion and improved integration of mine action into development and poverty reduction strategy plans -PRSP's, although the actual operationalisation of these integration efforts still remains to be implemented in many countries and regions,
- We note a 30 percent increase of funding for mine action in comparison to last year however it should also be noted that 75 percent of this increase originates from only two donors, Japan and the European Commission, and over two thirds of the increase went to one single recipient country, i.e. Afghanistan

All this is good, it is more than good. However, challenges remain and as reported at previous occasion in relation to current progress, we are deeply concerned about findings noting the apparent risk that a number of countries will have difficulties in meeting deadlines for mine clearance, a deadline that 14 State Parties reach in March 2009, only some 6 ½ years ahead.

A relation between mine action activities and the respective State Party's Article 5 deadlines must be emphasised and articulated when planning and coordinating mine clearance operations clarifying the sequence, progress and devolution of activities in order to meet deadlines.

Article 5 of the Mine Ban Treaty requires “*destruction of all anti personnel mines in mined areas...*”. The ICBL and many others have for years used the term *mine free* to describe the central goal of eradication of antipersonnel landmines. Increasingly, other terms are being used to describe the objective such as mine safe, risk free and impact free. In the coming years these terms need to be discussed more thoroughly and there needs to be a better definition of precisely what the objective means as the international community continues to grapple with the solution to the landmine problem. Some State Parties are already using terms other than *mine free* and indicating difficulties meeting the 10-year deadline even with this lesser standard.

Two evident examples of State Parties elaborating on this development are Bosnia and Herzegovina and Mozambique. Bosnia stating a mile stone to be free of the threat of landmines and UXO by 2010, their Article 5 deadline coming up in 2009<sup>1</sup>. And Mozambique’s mine action plan adopted in 2001 declares the goal of becoming a mine impact free country within 10 years, also them with a deadline in 2009.

This approach strongly implies the need for increased transparency and improved priority setting mechanism and a greater focus on post-clearance land use, increasing the cost efficiency as well as effectiveness of mine action and mine clearance operations. This process obviously facilitated by the 4P approach introduced by the Implementation Support Unit requesting the reporting on plans, priorities, progress and problems to reach the set goal.

Another concern is the evident lack of comprehension of the Convention and its contents at lower administrative levels in mine affected countries. There is a clear need for greater education about the appropriate implementation of the Convention and a realistic integration of the implications of the Convention among local and provincial authorities such as police stations, administrations and municipality centres as well as among mine action operators and other humanitarian organisations. This would significantly improve the successful implementation of the Convention both within mine action as well as in mine victim assistance, increase accountability and the overall understanding for the total eradication of the landmine problem.

These somewhat theoretically expressed concerns are visualised through examples from Afghanistan in which my Co-Chair Hakimi elaborates on Afghan responses to this matter and can be found in the handout version of this document.

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<sup>1</sup> BHMAL defines the objectives as the survey, clearance and release to the community of all priority 1 land, and marking of all priority 2 land.

(Hakimi's expls)

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I also congratulate State parties on their achievements in different aspects of the Ottawa convention implementation. As Sara mentioned we are deeply concerned about findings noting the apparent risk that a number of countries will have difficulties in meeting deadlines for mine clearance. But Afghanistan in general and the Mine Action in particular got very good experiences during last years and I would like to share Afghanistan experiences regarding the efforts to meet deadlines with those state parties which have concern in this regard.

As soon as Afghanistan ratified the convention and submitted the instrument, the Afghan government and Mine Action Program for Afghanistan drafted the 10 years Strategic plan which is based upon clearance, awareness and victim support prioritization through social-economic impact factors. For the implementation and sustainability of this strategy Team Approach, Strong Coordination Mechanism, Governmental Commitment and Coordination, Donor Balance of Multi-Year Humanitarian and Developmental Mine Action Funding, Cost Effectiveness, Transparency and accountability have been fully included.

Regarding the 2<sup>nd</sup> concern which is the lack of comprehension of the convention and its contents at lower administrative and group levels in mine affected countries,

We the Mine Action Program Components, means all demining agencies and victim assistance organizations together with the Government of Afghanistan, Mine Action Center For Afghanistan and Afghan CBL conduct joint ventures to pass the messages of the convention to both the lower administrative level in different part of the country as well as to the groups through the following activities which has assisted us in successful implementation of the convention .

- 1- Lobbying with the government in the provinces and districts levels
- 2- Volunteers communication program for supporting the campaign
- 4- Females workshop on banning landmines
- 5- Afghan Mine Action and Awareness Month (AMAAM)
- 6- Mine Victims Stories Book
- 7- Mine victim's survivor's workshop
- 8- Brochure in local languages
- 9- Notebooks, Marked by convention messages for the schools
- 10- Banners/ Metal boards in different places of the cities
- 11- Regular Publication and distribution of CBL News Bulletin
- 12- Printing of Calendars
- 13- Radio / T.V Programs
- 14- Holding of Press Conferences
- 15- Campaigners Participation in different National Events
- 16- Collection of Petitions in support of a total ban on landmines
- 17- Letter Campaign

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Because of our joint effort in Afghanistan we got the following results so far

1. Assessment, Planning and destruction of stock piles has been started,
2. Justice ministry authorities are working on national legislations,
3. Article 7 report was submitted,
4. And the Mine Action Activities continues based on the national strategic plan.

This was our experiences in Afghanistan which has assisted us to achieve our goal and objectives in the last year and hopefully meet the deadline on time and thank you for your attention.