



Report by the Delegation of Trinidad and Tobago to the Seventh Meeting of the States Parties Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (7MSP) on the Workshop on the Role of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in pursuing the aims of the Ottawa Convention

Thank You Madame President.

Madame President, the Workshop on the Role of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in pursuing the aims of the Ottawa Convention was held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago on 29-30 June, 2006. This Workshop was convened by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the technical guidance of the Implementation Support Unit and financial support from the Government of Canada.

This workshop was the first activity under the Small States Strategy that is being pursued under the Convention and which is aimed at promoting the primary goals of universalization and implementation. My delegation therefore noted with interest the statement during the Opening Ceremony of the Honourable Teresa Gambaro, Australia's Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Special Representative for Mine Action, that Australia will fund a similar workshop in the Asia-Pacific Region. Trinidad and Tobago therefore wish this venture every success.

Madame President, the fourteen (14) Member States of CARICOM are among the smallest of States Parties to the Convention and they face unique challenges in their participation and implementation of the Convention owing to financial and human resource constraints. Also, it is noteworthy that the destruction of stockpiled land mines and/or the clearing of mined areas are activities that remain relevant for only two States in our Region. Nonetheless, the fact that all CARICOM Member States have ratified the Convention is strong testament to their commitment to achieving the overarching goal of ending the suffering and destruction wrought by anti-personnel mines; a commitment that was reiterated by representatives of Member States throughout the Workshop.

In recognizing the importance of universalization and implementation, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago convened the Workshop in keeping with Article 58 of the Nairobi Action Plan which encourages the convening of workshops and conferences on a voluntary basis by various actors. Partnership and cooperation in our view were the underlying themes of the Workshop. Partnership has been a longstanding principle within the Caribbean Community and

thus provided a logical and practical platform from which could be pursued a collaborative approach. Further, the presence of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Organization of American States and the CARICOM Secretariat, whose representatives provided clear guidance on ways in which they could assist CARICOM States underscored the importance of cooperation and assistance as outlined in Article 6 of the Convention.

Madame President, the Workshop agreed that the CARICOM Region would consider, from its perspective, the following logical steps:

1. **Universalization** but through a balanced process in which the interest shown in convincing a state to ratify or accede to the Convention would continue beyond this initial stage.
2. **Ensuring a mine-free future** by improving awareness of the Convention, its obligations and the need for compliance.
3. **Legislation:** noting the advances made in establishing national implementation legislation by those States which have done so, and taking relevant measures as required. In this particular area, Trinidad and Tobago's process in establishing national legislation and its ongoing critique of this legislation has been identified as a best practice which could be modeled by other states in the Region.
4. **Initial Transparency** whereby those states in the Region which have not fully complied with their reporting obligations will seek to do so at the earliest;
5. **Ongoing transparency** in which all States in the Region would undertake to comply fully with their reporting obligations;
6. **Stockpile Destruction** under which the assistance requirements of those states with stockpiled mines will be assessed.
7. **Mine Clearance** and it is noted that in this respect, one state's report on completion of the mine clearance process can become a model for others.
8. And finally, **the identification of practical ways** in which the Region's States Parties can participate in the broader work of the Convention such as through the use of regional organizations in keeping with Article 6 on Cooperation and Assistance; and information sharing particularly with respect to transparency reporting and coordination.

In closing Madame President, Trinidad and Tobago wishes to thank all those who contributed to the success of the Workshop. The untiring efforts and valuable support of Mr Kerry Brinkert, Manager and Ms Sophie Delfolie of the Implementation Support Unit must be given special mention and to them I personally extend my gratitude. In my delegation's view this Workshop has provided the foundation upon which the more active participation of the CARICOM Region in the work of the Ottawa Convention will be realized.

Thank you, Madame President.