

STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE IN SUPPORT OF MINE ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

PRESENTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECOND REVIEW CONFERENCE

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Background

1. One of the most significant outcomes of the 2009 Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World was the strong interest expressed by States Parties and others in strengthening international cooperation and assistance and the implementation of Article 6. Lack of resources have been identified by implementation stakeholders as a key obstacle for States Parties in meeting their obligations within victim assistance, mine clearance and in some instances, stockpile destruction.
2. With the Cartagena Action Plan, States Parties “...recognize that fulfilling their obligations will require sustained substantial political, financial and material commitments, provided both through national commitments and international, regional and bilateral cooperation and assistance, in accordance with the obligations under Article 6.”
3. The nineteen actions in the section on international cooperation and assistance describe steps all States Parties and other relevant implementation actors should take to support implementation of the Convention in affected areas. The actions in particular emphasise the importance of mapping and identifying needs, of making the needs known and of supporting States Parties with such needs, as preconditions for effective implementation of Article 6.
4. Two discussion papers on international cooperation and assistance for mine clearance and victim assistance respectively were prepared for a special session held on 25 June during the week of the Intersessional Work Programme. This separation was done as mine clearance and victim assistance have different timelines, involve distinct national and international actors and relate to different national institutional and regulatory frameworks and budget lines. Attempts to address two so distinct subject matters under a common heading of “Mine Action” may confuse rather than clarify the core issues and true needs. The decision to separate the discussions was well received, as it was agreed that this enabled more relevant and substantive discussions on the respective themes.
5. The special session demonstrated the strong commitment and interest States Parties and other key actors have in addressing Article 6 issues in a focused and systematic manner. While international cooperation and assistance has been on the agenda of all formal and informal meetings of the Convention, it has often been discussed in a fragmented manner and it has been difficult to explore core issues in a comprehensive manner.

6. Two informal contact groups on *Resource Mobilization/Utilization* and on *Linking Mine Action to Development*, have for some years addressed different aspects of cooperation and assistance. Discussions in both contact groups have yielded significant input to the States Parties on resource issues. However, their informal status and the fact that the meetings have taken place outside the plenary have led to limited attendance, in particular from small delegations, often from mine affected countries.
7. The discussions on international cooperation and assistance during and after the Cartagena Summit indicate that there is a strong case to be made for locating the debates at the centre of the implementation work, i.e. both at Meetings of the States Parties and at the intersessional work. There is also a need to ensure a certain continuity in the discussions as well as some degree of institutional ownership and responsibility for moving the discussion forward.
8. Both contact group coordinators, Canada and Norway, have indicated that they may discontinue the informal Contact Groups as a way to support a new plenary structure for addressing resource issues. This could help to focus States Parties' efforts in their consultations on how to match needs with resources. Since both Contact Groups are informal, this will not require any decisions by the States Parties.

Issues to address

9. The discussions prior to and during the Cartagena Summit; at the 25 June special session; in the Contact Groups and at various workshops and other occasions have helped to focus on some key issues that States Parties and other implementation actors should address in a concerted and systematic manner. The section on international cooperation and assistance in the Cartagena Action Plan provides States Parties with a comprehensive list of issues that would gain from being discussed in a systematic manner at both the informal and formal meetings of the Convention.
10. The Mine Ban Convention is the main framework for identifying and mobilising resources for mine action. The meetings of the Convention go beyond traditional pledging sessions, as they provide all implementation actors with ample opportunities for formal and informal direct interaction, comprehensive updates and frank discussions on needs, strategies and effective approaches in mine action. As such, the formal and informal meetings helps to keep the risk of developing an *implementation gap – understood as the increasing discrepancy between intentions and actions addressing the problem* - in mine action low.
11. To reinforce the strong emphasis on implementation that has been the trademark of Convention meetings, discussions on resources, cooperation and assistance should focus on the *concrete steps* all States Parties and other key implementation actors could take to improve the systems and procedures for identifying, mobilising and providing both fiscal and non-fiscal resources to meet identified needs. Furthermore, discussions should focus on how these systems may be geared towards ensuring efficient and effective resource utilization with a view to maximising the

humanitarian and development impact of the work.

12. Discussions on resources over the past years, and in particular during the 25 June special session have identified a number of issues which, if they are addressed in a systematic and constructive manner by the implementation community, may be crucial to the success of ongoing and future mine action programs. Such issues include:

- Improving efficiency of all aspects of the transfer of financial resources from providers to receivers, with a view to reduce delays and extra costs
- Identifying obstacles and opportunities for more efficient South/South cooperation, triangular cooperation and cooperation among affected states
- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the different implementation actors, including national authorities, the UN, the ICRC, Mine Action NGOs and private sector actors.
- Taking steps to strengthen national ownership and the mobilisation of domestic mine action resources
- Taking steps to map the full magnitude of the problems and the resources needed to address them, and to communicate this in a meaningful manner.
- Taking steps to ensure predictable and sustainable dedicated mine action funding
- Improving integration of mine action into long-term development programs
- Identifying new models for cooperation between affected states and resource providers from all sectors
- Identifying innovative ways of mobilising resources for mine action in and outside affected states and areas
- Engaging non-traditional providers and sources of mine action support, such as factoring mine clearance as investment cost into infrastructure projects
- Developing models to project the economic, developmental and social costs of continued mine contamination and continued exclusion of survivors from society and the economic sector
- Improving transparency in reporting on support for victim assistance
- Broadening the understanding of what it takes to be a State Party "...in a position to provide support."
- Building relationships with other relevant international instruments and developing the potential for optimisation of resource mobilisation.

Considerations and conclusions

13. There is agreement among States Parties and within the broader implementation community that discussions on Article 6 and resources need to be formalised and that they need to take place in the plenary sessions of both formal and informal meetings. This can be done in a variety of ways, and the final decision on this should be seen in the broader context of the review of the intersessional work program.
14. Any decision on a new structure should take into consideration the capacity of States Parties to take on roles as Co-Chairs and Co-Rapporteurs in the coming years.
15. Experience over the years demonstrates the practical and substantive importance of ISU support to the Standing Committees and the informal contact groups.

Recommendation

16. Effective cooperation and assistance will be key to implementation of the Convention over the coming years. States Parties should reflect this importance in their efforts to implement the Cartagena Action Plan up until 2014, by moving the issue towards the centre of their discussions. The Intersessional Work Programme including meetings of the Standing Committees has proved to be an effective way to engage States Parties and the rest of the implementation community in focussed discussions on key issues. Establishing a new Standing Committee on Article 6 in 2011 and discontinuing the two informal Contact Groups therefore seems to be the best way to ensure progress on the issue of matching needs with resources.