

Statement by the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance

(Algeria, Canada, the Netherlands and Uganda)

on

Preliminary observations of the Committee towards the 16th Meeting of the States Parties

Read out at the Intersessional Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Introduction

The Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which consists of Algeria, Canada, the Netherlands (chair) and Uganda, would like to provide an overview of the activities it has been carrying out over the course of the first half of this year with a view towards the 16th Meeting of the States Parties. Following this, we will offer the floor to States Parties to highlight their cooperation and assistance efforts. For your convenience, the statement will be uploaded on the website of the APMBC for future reference.

Allow us now to remind States Parties of the mandate of the Committee, and the state of play on the three priorities as lined out in the letter the Committee sent to the States Parties dated 8 February 2017 including 1) mapping needs and challenges, 2) the individualised approach and 3) the Platform for Partnerships. I will ask Committee members to each take a turn in addressing these matters.

Allow me to turn first to my colleague from Algeria to recall the Committee's mandate to participants.

Purpose, mandate and organisation of the Committee

Under the decisions on the Convention's machinery and meetings, adopted at the Maputo Review Conference in 2014, the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance was established with the following purpose: 'to assist the States Parties in the full implementation of Article 6 of the Convention, in line with their reaffirmation that ending the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines is a shared commitment'.

With this purpose in mind the Committee is mandated to, among other things, promote cooperation and assistance under the Convention, facilitate the fostering of partnerships between States Parties seeking to receive assistance and those in a position to provide such assistance and coordinate with other implementation mechanisms established by the States Parties in order to facilitate and accelerate the full implementation of the Convention.

Since the 15th MSP, the chair has convened five Committee meetings to discuss different aspects of our work. The Committee also held a meeting with the Committee on Victim Assistance in May 2017 to enhance the coordination of our efforts to push forward the implementation of the Convention. Committee members also held ad hoc meetings with diverse stakeholders, including mine-affected States Parties, in order to work on its priorities and objectives. Lastly, the Committee fed back its progress at the meetings of the Coordination Committee.

One of the efforts the Committee is carrying out is mapping needs and challenges, which I will now offer the floor to our Committee colleague from Uganda to address.

Mapping needs and challenges

We all understand that a continued dialogue is important to measure the progress of the Convention. One key aspect of this is to share our needs and challenges.

In order to map the needs and challenges of the States Parties implementing obligations related to article 4 (destruction of stockpiles of anti-personnel mines) and to article 5 (destruction of anti-personnel mines in mined areas) as well as challenges in providing assistance to victims in accordance with the Maputo Action Plan, the Committee requested in its letter to States Parties to include their needs and challenges in their article 7 transparency reports or to inform the Committee in another way. The article 7 transparency reports are currently being analysed by the other Committees under the Convention and the Implementation Support Unit. There has been a wealth of information that has been recorded by the Victim Assistance Committee in terms of challenges faced by States Parties. Likewise, some States Parties have expressed challenges faced in implementing Article 5 obligations.

Separately, Mauritania shared a proposal with the Committee to fulfil their article 5 obligations for a project to clear the entire area of Sebkhath Fogra in order to reduce risks of life and socioeconomic livelihoods in the north of Mauritania. This four months long projects needs additional funding of USD 75.000 to be completed. The Committee would like to call upon the States Parties in a position to such assistance to contact the Committee or the ISU to further take this up.

Also, the chair of the Committee had a meeting with a representative of the Mission of Iraq in Geneva in which the challenges and needs of Iraq were put forward, in particular the recent contamination of mines and IEDs caused by terrorist groups especially in the northern parts of Iraq, which requires additional cooperation and assistance from the international community in order for Iraq to fulfil its obligations under article 5 of the Convention.

Likewise we have spoken to additional States that have expressed other challenges such as security issues and lack of funding.

The work and knowledge of the Article 5 Committee and Victim Assistance Committee, which work closely with States Parties, is obviously crucial for the Committee on Cooperation and Assistance. For this reason we have begun to engage both Committees in order to ensure that we maintain strong communication concerning our efforts. During the May meeting with the Committee on Victim Assistance, possible areas for further cooperation were discussed, including the possibility that the Committee on Victim Assistance could signal to the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance when it identifies needs and challenges in (reports of) States Parties that could subsequently be addressed with that State Party and the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance. For the remaining period until the 16th MSP, the Committee will also endeavor to find similar linkages with the Committee on Article 5 Implementation.

Likewise, the Committee feels that States with several needs and facing a wealth of challenges could profit from taking advantage of the individualised approach of the Convention.

I offer the floor back to the Chair for to address this matter.

Individualised approach

As part of the Committee's mandate to facilitate the fostering of partnerships between States Parties seeking to receive assistance and those in a position to provide such assistance, and in follow up to the recommendations contained in the final document of the 15th MSP (in particular Annex 1), the Committee will continue developing the individualised approach to cooperation and assistance.

This approach aims to create a method for interested mine-affected States Parties to share detailed information on the challenges they face and their needs to address these challenges in order to fulfil their obligations under the Convention. It provides an opportunity to connect with the donor community, partners for South-South and regional cooperation, Mine Action operators and other stakeholders.

A first pilot meeting was held on the margins of the 15th MSP in Santiago de Chile. The Committee subsequently met with a number of relevant stakeholders and affected states in order to identify lessons learnt with a view to improving the methodology. We thank those that joined us for this meeting.

It also had meetings with a number of affected states that showed interest in taking advantage of the individualised approach. We have included a one pager on the individualised approach for your reference (see attachment).

This morning we held the second of these meetings with Sudan. In preparation of this meeting, lessons learnt from the pilot meeting in December were taken into account by, for example, preparing and sending all the meeting materials, such as the country's presentation on challenges and needs and a detailed agenda with questions, well ahead of the meeting to the participants. The Committees on Victim Assistance and Article 5 Implementation also attended this meeting in order to continue strengthening our collaboration.

We hope that this approach will be a valuable step for the affected state, and that it will lead to future meetings, and enhanced coordination of mine action stakeholders, in-country, and here in Geneva as needed.

The Committee intends to formulate the lessons learnt from this meeting as well to improve the methodology of the individualised approach and at the same time continue its follow-up with the affected State Party as and when it wishes. The Committee will continue the development of the individualised approach and will present some conclusions and recommendations to the 16th Meeting of the States Parties.

In addition to the individualised approach, the Committee has been engaging further with the platform for partnership in order to explore how to best make use of it.

Platform for Partnerships

As part of our mandate to look at the use for information exchange tools to foster partnerships between States Parties, the Committee began exploring way to take advantage of the Platform for Partnership.

In a letter sent by the Committee's letter dated 8 February 2017 highlighting its priorities, the Committee encouraged States to provide new or updated information as well as to provide feedback on the functioning of the platform by 30 April 2017. Unfortunately, the Committee has not received any new or updated information nor feedback on the functioning of the platform.

So far this year, the Committee looked at ways to improve the Platform for Partnerships. We have also considered the possibility of adding an online tool for reporting to facilitate reporting by States Parties and encourage additional information on the challenges faced. This would not be an additional reporting requirement but would follow the current template and include references to the Guide to Reporting adopted by the States Parties. This online reporting tool could also include an additional voluntary form for sharing of information on public and/or password protected sections of the Platform for Partnerships.

The Committee had an initial discussion in May with the Coordination Committee on some of its ideas for the Platform, and its next steps will take into account the feedback from this meeting.

At this stage, the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance intends to explore, with interested States Parties, whether and for what purposes they would use a Platform for Partnerships tool, and how the current Platform could be enhanced to better meet their needs, in order to determine whether going forward with expanding the Platform would be worthwhile.

The Committee will also consider how it could encourage (past) affected States Parties to contribute to the Platform, in particular those that may be in a position to provide specific expertise due to their unique position. The Committee intends to present recommendations on this at the 16th MSP.

We look forward to engaging with interested States Parties on this issue in the coming months.

Conclusion

You have heard from us, now we would like to hear from you.

I have some speakers on my list.

I will start by giving the floor to.....

[ISU TO PROVIDE A SPEAKERS LIST]

On the basis of its mandate, the Committee intends to continue its work along the lines of the priorities it set out. The Committee would welcome any feedback or suggestions for improving its work. At the end, we know that cooperation and assistance will be a key element of meeting our goal of a mine free world by 2025. The Maputo Actin Plan contains six important actions on this topic.

As the chair, I would like to thank my Committee members for their tireless efforts, excellent cooperation and commitment so far. The Committee also would like to thank the ISU and in particular the director Juan Carlos Ruan for his outstanding support and encouragement. We look forward to continuing our work with a view to presenting further results at the next Meeting of the States Parties in Vienna in December.

Attachment

- One-pager on the individualised approach