

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Financial predictability and sustainability of UN assessed contributions

Report by the President

Introduction

The costs of servicing annual Meetings of the States Parties of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention are paid by assessed contributions from participating States adjusted in accordance with the UN scale of assessment as stated in Article 14 of the Convention: “the costs of the Meetings of the States Parties, the Special Meetings of the States Parties, the Review Conferences and the Amendment Conferences shall be borne by the States Parties and States not parties to this Convention participating therein, in accordance with the United Nations scale of assessment adjusted appropriately.”

Each year, the Meeting of the States Parties adopts the United Nations’ estimated costs for servicing the next Meeting of the States Parties which are prepared and submitted by the United Nations and typically include the following items:

- 1) interpretation and meeting servicing
- 2) translation and documentation
- 3) support services requirements (sound technician/recording)
- 4) other requirements (documentation distribution officers, documents control officer, rental of computer, printers and digital audio recorders, a secretary and dedicated assistance provided for accounting services and administration of financial resources.)

In 2016, the United Nations started implementing UMOJA, a new financial system which prevents the advancement by the United Nations of resources unless sufficient funds are available in advance of the meeting. The introduction of this system affected the preparation and the planning and even threatened the holding of the 2016 Fifteenth Meeting of the States Parties (15MSP) due to the fact that insufficient funds were available to the United Nations. As a result and in order for the meeting to take place, intensive resource mobilisation efforts were carried out by the President of the 15MSP in a very short period of time and, even then, an unprecedented number of cost-cutting measures had to be put in place. One of these unprecedented measures included the host country covering partial costs for interpretation.

Since 2016, measures have been put in place which contributed to an overall improvement of the financial situation. These measures are related to (a) ensuring enhanced awareness by States of the need to pay their assessed contributions early in the year and encouragement for them to act accordingly and (b) retaining some of the cost cutting measures established at the 15MSP.

Measures established in the context of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention to ensure the financial predictability and sustainability

Since the 15MSP in 2016, a number of measures were taken on an ad-hoc basis to (a) cut down the costs of meetings and increase efficiency related to the UN management of meetings (b) encourage States to pay their assessed contributions early in the year and to settle their arrears. In addition, the Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties (16MSP) decided to adopt cost estimates including a 15% contingency to mitigate a potential shortfall in the payment of contributions for the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties (17MSP) to take place in 2018.

(a) Measures taken since the 15MSP to cut down costs of meetings and increase the efficiency of the UN management of meetings:

- Reduction of the number of languages for interpretation from six to three (15MSP);
- Payment of interpretation in three languages by the host country (15MSP) on a one-time basis;
- Reduction of number of pages of documents (15MSP, 16MSP and 17MSP);
- Reduction of number of languages in which the documents are being translated (15MSP, 16MSP and 17MSP);
- E-document meeting with Official documents no longer distributed during meetings (15MSP, 16MSP and 17MSP);
- Reduction of UN staff supporting meetings (15MSP and 16MSP);
- Reduction of the length of the meetings (15MSP and 16MSP reduced from five to four days).

(b) Increased transparency on the status of assessed contributions and contacts with States since the 15MSP:

- Monthly update on the status of assessed contributions published monthly on UNOG website to increase transparency;
- In January of each year, the United Nations sends early invoices to States consisting of their assessed contribution for the current year and their outstanding contribution from previous years;
- Inclusion of an agenda item on assessed contributions in all three Convention-related meetings (Pledging Conference, intersessional meetings, Meetings of the States Parties) and presentations by UNODA on the issue (since the 15MSP) encouraging States to pay their dues in compliance with Article 14 and to do so early as possible and well ahead of the meetings;
- Update on the financial situation provided by UNODA to the Convention's Coordinating Committee at every meeting of the Coordinating Committee (since the 15MSP)
- In 2018, letters by UNODA sent to States that have accumulated two or more years of arrears (17MSP);
- Bilateral meetings organised by the President and/or UNODA with selected States with outstanding contributions (15MSP, 16MSP and 17MSP);
- Written communication to specific States Parties with outstanding communications (15MSP, 16MSP and 17MSP).

(c) Inclusion of a 15 percent contingency line in the cost estimates (16MSP)

Observations

1. States Parties, the President of the Convention and the United Nations have demonstrated once again their commitment to the Convention. They have worked together in a cooperative spirit to establish practical measures to address what was a serious financial situation in 2016 taking on, in many cases, responsibilities and obligations unrelated to their mandates to ensure successful holdings of their Meetings of the States Parties.
2. Time is necessary to examine if the measures put in place in the context of this Convention since 2016 will have a long-lasting impact on the financial situation of the Meetings of the States Parties prior to the States Parties considering the adoption of other measures.
3. Many of the cost-cutting measures put in place have not impeded the substantial work of the Convention. In the future, these cost-cutting measures, if need be, should continue to be considered.

4. While the President can assist in resource mobilisation efforts by raising attention on the matter, States Parties would like to recall that ensuring that UN assessed contributions are duly paid by States is not within the mandate of the President;
5. In addition, there is a need to monitor measures taken by other disarmament Conventions to assess their effect and to establish if these measures are applicable in the context of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention;
6. States with outstanding contributions will need to continue to be approached directly as it may not be necessary to establish Convention-wide measures to deal with a handful of States which have arrears. As noted, in 2018 (as of 31 July) many of the outstanding contributions are relatively small (e.g. in 2018, 31 of the 44 States which still owed contributions as of 31 July 2018, owed less than US\$500), 95% of the amount of funding still due as of 31 July 2018 is owed by eight States and sizeable arrears are due by 5 States.
7. States Parties should continue their dialogue on this matter and continue to closely monitor the situation in the lead up to the Fourth Review Conference to ensure prompt payments of assessed contributions. This dialogue and monitoring should be held in close cooperation with the States Parties that have accumulated arrears with the continued support of the United Nations in ensuring the continued raising of awareness and transparency on the status of contributions on a monthly basis and the sending of periodic reminders.