

## **Session 2 - The Committee on Article 5 Implementation:**

Thank you very much Mr. President.

Belgium has the pleasure of Chairing the Committee on Article 5 Implementation in 2022 working together with France, Iraq and Sri Lanka.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the matter of the Committee's observations.

I will be brief given that the observations are online for all of you to read. I also understand that the observations have been or will be circulated to relevant State Parties. The Committee's preliminary observations are based on the information provided by your state within your Article 7 Reports as well as in updated work plans and extension requests. We very much welcome your feedback on these observations going forward.

I want to thank all States that have engaged with the Committee and have provided us with information on your implementation efforts. Congratulations on the progress that has been achieved by your State.

A few things we would like to emphasize from our preliminary observations:

- Firstly we welcome the wealth of information submitted by the State Parties in their Article 7 Reports, Extension Requests and Updated Work plan.

However, 11 mine affected States Parties, as of mid-June, have not submitted Article 7 Reports. We also note that two of these States Parties have not submitted reports in two or more years. We are hopeful that this situation will improve as we go forward this year.

We also highlighted that two States Parties have not submitted updated work plans in accordance with decision on their request. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of State Parties complying with the decision of States Parties on request for extension and welcome engaging with these States over the course of the next two days.

We also highlighted in our observations the ongoing situation with Eritrea concerning their non-compliance status with Article 5 of the Convention following the expiration of their deadline without a request for extension having been submitted. We hope to hear from Eritrea during the next two days and to establish a cooperative dialogue with Eritrea to resolve this matter ahead of the Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties. This is, of course, not only a matter of the Article 5 Committee but one that affects all of us as States Parties. We will come back to this matter.

- Secondly, while challenges remain, States have reported on significant progress in the implementation of their obligations under Article 5. Many States Parties have also reported dealing with contamination from, not only mines, but a wealth of explosive ordnance including improvised anti-personnel mines. In some cases greater disaggregation of the threat faced would be welcome to better understand the context of your work and the way your state is prioritizing mine risk education and land release efforts based on the impact on its population.
  
- Thirdly, we welcome the updates provided by your States in the implementation of different aspects of the Oslo Action Plan, including:
  - Your efforts to keep national standards up to date with best practices embodied in the IMAS to ensure more effective and efficient implementation;
  - Your effort to deliver and strengthen the delivery of mine risk education and risk reduction efforts, this is particularly important in States that are seeing newly laid anti-personnel mines;
  - Your effort to strengthen the mainstreaming of gender and diversity and ensuring that we respond to the diverse needs of the populations of mine affected communities. This is one aspect that we would like to hear more from you on, given that this rests at the core of our humanitarian disarmament efforts, and;
  - Your efforts to ensure that you have a sustainable national capacity in place to address threats post completion.

These are some of the issues we would like to hear more from you on. Our preliminary observations highlight areas where we would welcome additional information. We have included our understanding of the status of your implementation efforts and have included some key issues we would welcome additional information from you. Please let us know if we have captured the status of implementation of your State accurately and where we have got it wrong.

We look forward to hearing from you during our session later this afternoon as well as during the thematic panel tomorrow.

Thank you once again to all of you, and back to you Mr. President.