



Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention 2022 Intersessional Meetings

June 2022

Reflections on the Article 5 Process

(Check against Delivery)

Thank you Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to offer a few reflections on the issue of the Article 5 process. But first, I would like to congratulate the United States on its new anti-personnel landmine policy, announced yesterday. This is a tremendously positive development.

Turning now to the Article 5 process and some reflections, the first is that exploring ways to continually improve is, typically, a good thing. Taking a long view, we have seen steadily increasing quality in the technical detail and granularity of many Article 5 requests. With this, we have seen improvements in the estimates of cost and resources required to deliver plans.

We have also seen greater inclusion of operational organisations and expertise in the development of national plans and extension requests. The Article 5 process and its implementation has also come to play an instrumental role in bringing organisations together with national authorities and embassies in support of national planning and ownership. Let's not underestimate the time it takes to build trust and relationships.

We do not, therefore, share the view that the Article 5 process is broken, or in need of radical overhaul. We would however welcome the scoping of options for refinement. In other words, we believe the focus should be on continuing a positive trajectory. Not diverting it.

Second, the Mine Action Review has become the 'go-to' resource for the status of Article 5 implementation and blockages to implementation. The Review's publications set out clearly, fairly and measurably what can be done to enhance progress against in Article 5 implementation. Enhancing effort to apply its recommendations is almost guaranteed to also enhance Article 5 implementation.

Third, the discussion around the Article 5 process has increased HALO's understanding of the sheer volume of work undertaken by the Committee and its members. We are deeply grateful for that.

It appears, however, that some of our collective work as NGOs could be a little 'out of sync' with the work of the Committee. The exact process varies but, in general, HALO and other mine action organisations tend to

work with mine action authorities in the period prior to submission of extensions in March. We then individually provide information to the Committee during the period prior to the intersessionals.

As we have heard, the opportunity for influence and refinement at that point is often limited. Perhaps there might be scope for greater informal dialogue in advance, perhaps in the margins of the preceding MSP? Perhaps there is an option for 'on the record' evidence to the Committee?

Turning to my fourth point, and as the Distinguished Ambassador of France has just said, many of the places HALO works are facing phenomenal challenge beyond Article 5. Of course none of this diminishes legal obligations – if anything, it highlights the importance of adhering to shared norms and commitments. But the challenges faced by many national authorities are vast and real. Retaining our connection to the realities of delivering Article 5 implementation on the ground is absolutely vital.

So to my fifth point. Non-compliance is not acceptable and we have seen a clear case of that here this week with Eritrea. But non-compliance it is not, in HALO's view, the norm or even the majority. We also share the Mine Action Review's view, expressed just now, that the number of extension requests is not, in itself, a measure for concern.

We have seen this week some clear areas where Article 5 progress and requests must be improved. But as the Distinguished Delegates of Norway and Switzerland both said earlier this morning, there are some excellent examples of compliance, accountability and progress. Perhaps, as a community, we can do more to incentivise compliance by celebrating success and progress against stiff odds, even when the wins and gains might feel small?

Mr Coordinator,

In closing, and as we have just heard from various Distinguished Delegates, the implementation of Article 5 goes hand-in-hand with international cooperation and assistance. Of course technical standards and political will are key. But, after conflict, lack of funding is the largest single challenge to the implementation of Article 5. We hope to comment briefly on that later today.

Mr Coordinator, I reiterate HALO's full support to you and the Committee and we thank you again for listening to us here today.

I thank you.

ENDS