

Daily Update 2 December 2009

On Wednesday, 2 December, the Cartagena Summit continued with discussions on implementation, dealing with some of the more problematic areas of compliance with the Convention.

Updates continued from the 15 States Parties who had previously requested extensions for their clearance obligations, with a number providing positive reports but others a worrying lack of progress.

On the positive side, **Nicaragua** announced it should meet its 2010 deadline and would have 'excellent news' at the 10th Meeting of States Parties. The **UK** announced that demining in the Falkland Islands had begun this week, contracted to BACTEC for clearance and C. King Associates for oversight and that it looked forward to successful clearance of the islands to fulfill its obligations under both the MBT and the CCM. **Nigeria** said it should not have a problem complying with its Article 5 deadline, as its anti-personnel mine contamination was limited, unlike its contamination from ERW. Nigeria's announcement was significant as previously it was uncertain if Nigeria had a contamination problem.

Jordan stated that it was on target with its clearance plan. **Peru** described some progress carried out to clear mines emplaced around high voltage towers and police bases, and announced that work had started on clearing the Miguel Castro jail. **Senegal** was vague but said it hoped to be mine free by its 2015 extension deadline. **Mozambique** announced that in 2008-2009 its clearance exceeded its expectations and it was able to clear 116% of its target. **Namibia** announced that it was mine free, but previously has made contradictory statements as to whether it was affected by mines and has never formally declared any areas to be contaminated by anti-personnel mines. **Afghanistan** stated that three-fourths of its original mine problem had been cleared over the past 20 years and considerable progress had been made. Significant work remained however.

Australia mentioned a pledge of 6 million AUD to Sri Lanka, as well as to additional commitments in Afghanistan, Cambodia and Laos, while **Portugal** said it will make available minefield maps from its use of mines in Africa, despite being over 30 years old, Portugal said, it recognized the utility of the information.

However, **Zimbabwe** stated it would not meet its extended clearance deadline due to funding problems, while **Yemen** also indicated likely trouble meeting its deadline, and **Eritrea** and **Mauritania** announced they would need to request extensions shortly.

Zimbabwe said it was lagging one year behind in clearance work and only 40% of all mined areas had been cleared as a result of the economic sanctions on the country, which it said had caused an 'economic meltdown' and prevented it from accessing funding from the IMF or World Bank, importing equipment, or contracting commercial demining organizations. Survey work had still not started and it would have to prepare another extension request, Zimbabwe said. Clearance will require 4.56 million in funding and a new survey as Zimbabwe was currently operating on the basis of a 1994 survey. **Yemen** stated it was very disappointed that it was unlikely to meet its 2010 deadline, despite an increase in government funding from 50 to 60%, due to geographical conditions, shifting sands, and a lack of equipment and funding. **Eritrea** stated it would need to request an extension as it was taking much longer than expected to complete clearance. **Mauritania** also announced it would have to submit an extension request in early 2010 due to lack of resources.

There was less than positive news on stockpile destruction with **Belarus**, **Greece**, **Turkey** remaining in violation of their stockpile destruction obligations and now **Ukraine** confirming that it will miss its deadline. **Belarus** cited challenges in destroying its PFM mines as the reason for non-compliance and stated it would provide information in the future, following the recommendations of the 9th MSP.

Greece cited delayed initiation of transport of mines for destruction to facilities in Bulgaria, due to delays in securing an export license. All stocks had been gathered in locations for transport, Greece said, and shipment had been constant since it began at the end of October 2008, with almost 40% of its stockpile, or over 615,000 mines, having already been transferred for destruction.

Turkey stated it has already destroyed over 2 million mines in accordance with EU and UNEP standards on safety and environmental responsibility in its national facility, which was now running non-stop 24 hours a day. Turkey confirmed that as of October 2009, its remaining stockpile totaled over 900,000 mines, 32% of its original stockpile of nearly 3 million. As evidence of its commitment to transparency, Turkey said that in 2008,

representatives from the ICBL, ICRC, the ISU, and the President of the 8th MSP were invited to observe stockpile destruction in Turkey's destruction facility, and later Amb. Struli, President of the 9th MSP was also invited to visit. While Turkey missed its Treaty deadline, after the opening of its destruction facility in 2007, significant progress had been made in a short time, Turkey said, and that stockpile destruction was now in advanced stages and would be completed in early 2010.

Ukraine however disappointingly announced that it will shortly be in non-compliance with its treaty obligations as it will not be able to destroy its stockpiles by its 1 June 2010 deadline. Six million mines remain to be destroyed, despite some destruction having been carried out. Ukraine appealed for assistance to modernize destruction facilities and to acquire additional destruction equipment.

In reaction, **Canada** noted the progress made by both Greece and Turkey, but urged Belarus to start its destruction of its PFM mines as a matter of urgency. Lithuania stated it deeply regretted that the number of States Parties not in compliance with the Treaty will increase from 3 to 4, and said that while the main responsibility lies with States Parties, donor states should assist in building national ownership and invest in technological solutions for stockpile destruction, including for PFM mines.

The **ICRC** stated that it was not convinced that PFM mine destruction presented sufficient challenges to be a reason for delay, as technologically safe destruction methods had been identified, despite the challenges involved.

The **ICBL, ICRC, and Norway** however appeared to be the only delegations expressing real concerns that States Parties were in serious violation of the Convention. Norway emphasized the gravity of non-compliance as counterproductive to the humanitarian objectives of the Treaty.

States Parties also provided updates on mines retained for training and research purposes. **Algeria** stated in 2008 it reduced its number of mines retained from 15,000 to 6,000 and had destroyed the extra 9,000 mines. **Germany** declared that it had used 154 of its retained mines in 2009, 150 in a mine search exercise, and had consumed a total of 844 mines of its originally retained 3,000 plus mines. Slovakia announced that of the 1,500 mines it retained, 1,400 remained. The **ICRC** welcomed announcements from States that have reduced the numbers of mines they retain, but reminded States Parties that others have retained large numbers of mines for years without reporting on their intended purposes.

The **ICRC and ICBL** urged States Parties to consider issues of interpretation of key Articles 1 and 2 on the prohibition on assistance with illegal acts by non-States Parties and the definition of anti-personnel mine. The ICRC noted that in practice, most States Parties considered mines with sensitize fuses to be anti-personnel mines and covered by the Convention. The ICBL stated that it was a shortcoming that the Cartagena Action Plan did not include specific action points on Article 1 and 2, calling it 'stunning' that 10 years on, States Parties do not all agree on what mines are banned under the Convention and what acts are prohibited or permitted under the ban on assistance. Like the ICRC, ICBL noted that while there was convergence in practice in the understanding that mines activated by trip-wires, break-wires, or tilt rods were banned and planning or implementing any activity with respect to use by non-States Parties was prohibited, it was critical to establish common state practice and policy for the credibility of the Convention.

On transparency and Article 7 reporting, Co-Chairs **Japan and Chile and Belgium** called on States Parties to improve the rate of annual submission of Article 7 transparency reports and to report on national implementation measures in particular. Other matters such as the status of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) were also considered, with a proposal introduced to mandate a task force to evaluate the situation of the ISU. The ISU stated its annual expenditure was 950,000 USD but announced a funding deficit for the end of 2009 and appealed to States Parties for contributions. The **Netherlands** announced that it would contribute 150,000 USD in 2010.

The day concluded with States Parties agreeing on recommendations to be included in the final report on decisions, including a decision to grant the four extension requests and schedule of work for next year, with agreement to have another Review Conference at the end of 2014, and ISC meetings from 21-25 June 2010 and the 10th MSP will take place in Geneva from 29 November – 3 December 2010.

The highlight of the day, and for many likely to be the high-point of the week, was the 'Rumble in Cartagena' – a wheelchair rugby match between the quad rugby teams of the US and Colombia. The match was stunning, incredible, and inspirational, with players demonstrating amazing athletic ability in strength, stamina, agility, and sheer force as they maneuvered wheelchairs modified into chariot-like machines to run plays, evade opponents,

or to smash tackle them head on. Teams were composed of persons with various degrees of disability, such as one Colombian player demonstrating simply unbelievable strength and stamina to score nearly all of their tries, despite having no hands, no legs, and only one eye.

It was a raucous and heart-warming evening, with cheers on all sides and a powerful example of sport as a form of social inclusion for persons with disabilities. Events took a hilarious turn when spectators were invited to suit up and join the match. Firoz Ali Alizada, Ken Rutherford, and an exhilarated Thomas Nash joined the US' team, while Vice President Santos of Colombia and Prince Mired of Jordan joined the Colombians. The score was 2-2 with Prince Mired, Thomas, and Ken scoring tries. Check out photos courtesy of Mary Wareham:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/marywareham/>

A parallel reception was held by CIREC called "Star of Hope" – a gala evening awarding persons with disabilities who have shown great achievements as well as entities working on the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

During the day side events included:

- The side event on the Convention on Cluster Munitions was well-attended with more than 150 people participating, including the Deputy Foreign Minister from Colombia and the Assistant Foreign Minister from Lao PDR as well as CMC and UNDP. Colombia announced the completion of the destruction of its cluster bomb stockpiles. Lao PDR gave a powerful speech on the human suffering of people in Lao from cluster munitions and an update on the First Meeting of States Parties (1MSP), which is tentatively scheduled for November 2010, including the establishment of a national committee and a Lao support group to help with conference preparations. CMC remarked on progress made on new signatures and ratifications and identified next steps and objectives for 2010. UNDP announced that a trust fund for Lao's implementation work and for hosting the 1MSP was soon to be operational. From the floor, Chile announced plans to host a global meeting from 26-28 April 2010 to prepare for the 1MSP and South Africa expressed its intention to hold a workshop for African states in March 2010. Ecuador announced completion of domestic ratification whilst New Zealand and the UK gave updates on national legislation and ratification, with New Zealand's including a ban on investment in cluster munition producers. Ireland noted that whilst 2008 was an important year marking the negotiation and opening of signature of the Convention, 2010 is a key year seeing its entry into force and the 1MSP, for which momentum must be stepped up. Japan announced that it was promoting the Convention to states in the Asia Pacific region.
- During the side event "Ensuring access to social services for persons with disabilities in the Middle East," Handicap International and CBM introduced the "Disability Monitor Initiative - Middle East" and the "Making it Work" initiative as tools for survivors for effective social change. Both initiatives are about sharing information on good practices to develop effective public policies from the ground up, related to persons with disabilities. Participants discussed several action points from the draft Cartagena Action Plan that related very closely to the "Making it Work" initiative such as sharing knowledge of good practices and monitoring policy changes. For more information, contact: info@makingitwork-crpd.org Website: www.makingitwork-crpd.org
- Organized by CIREC and Religions for Peace, the event "Hope in the Chapel" brought together survivors, representatives of diverse religious communities and supportive governments to explore the connection between religions and VA. Participants shared and explored existing programs, both in Colombia and internationally. It also identified avenues for action including provision of counseling and spiritual support, ensuring accessible places of worship, promoting social inclusion and being a bridge to legal actors. For more information contact Allison Pytlak (apytlak@religionsforpeace.org)
- NPA hosted an event; "Land release and implementation of IMAS 8.20-22" was attended by approximately 60 people from donors, operators, affected countries and other stakeholders. Of six panelists the two Directors for Mine Action Centers in Zambia and Ethiopia made the most compelling statements for a renewed ownership of the Land release agenda, and national authority's responsibility to implement the new IMAS. The room was in general agreement that better survey techniques, and more focus on efficient and effective use of resources would lead to quicker implementation of the obligations under Article 5. The participants left with an even stronger sense of what is needed from all actors to have the IMAS translated into quality national policies and standards. For more information, contact Atle Karlsen at atlek@npaid.org
- The US Campaign to Ban Landmines hosted a briefing on the US and Landmines – for information contact Mary Wareham (wareham@hrw.org)

- The GICHD hosted an event “Contracting in mine action,” for information contact Ian Mansfield at i.mansfield@gichd.org

- HI and CBM hosted “Ensuring access to social services for persons with disabilities in the Middle East” – for information please contact Paul Vermeulen pvermeulen@handicap-international.ch

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