

ICBL Statement on Transparency
Mine Ban Treaty Intersessional Standing Committee Meetings
Geneva, Switzerland
27 May 2013



Thank you Mr. Co-Chair.

I would like to highlight some advantages of timely, accurate and comprehensive reporting, and thank Belgium for their longstanding leadership on this issue.

Transparency was given a central role by the negotiators of the Mine Ban Treaty. Those states that are most effective in implementing the treaty are those that have the relevant information on stockpile destruction, clearance, victim assistance or other central tasks easily accessible. Good reporting helps attract international support by demonstrating the nature of the remaining work and the steps needed to complete it. It can also build confidence among states, for instance among neighboring countries.

Just as regular and comprehensive reporting will help states achieve the treaty's objectives, poor reporting can work against this goal and erodes the tradition of openness of the treaty. It is disturbing therefore that the transparency rate is decreasing year after year, with an unprecedentedly large number of States Parties having failed to submit their annual report by 30 April 2013.

As of 25 May 2013, **only 59 States Parties had submitted reports for calendar year 2012, constituting less than 40% of states required to do so. In other words, 96 States Parties are late in submitting their annual updates.** As it stands now, this is the lowest annual compliance rate in the past decade.

We welcome the initial reports sent in by Finland, Somalia, and South Sudan, and we hope to see all outstanding initial reports submitted by the Third Review Conference, a goal also listed by Belgium. We also support Belgium's goal of increasing annual reporting by allowing States Parties without implementation obligations to send a simple Note Verbale.

Of greater concern is a lack of reporting by States Parties with key obligations. **For example, 15 States Parties with clearance obligations and 41 States Parties that retain mines have not submitted a report for 2012.¹ We are also disappointed that 14 States Parties with significant numbers of survivors have not submitted their report for 2012.²**

The quality of reporting is as critical as quantity, and is also not up to the standards we would like. We agree with Belgium that "States Parties should give the clearest picture of the progress of the implementation of the Convention's obligations." Unfortunately, states do not always fill in all of the relevant forms, including on clearance obligations and on past and planned use of retained mines.

In addition, most states provide little information on victim assistance or cooperation and assistance under Form J. As a more structured form could help prompt such reporting, we support Belgium's proposal for new voluntary reporting forms on VA and International Cooperation. Although not an

¹ The States Parties that both have clearance obligations and mines retained are: Angola, Bhutan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, DRC, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Mauritania, Serbia, Sudan, Venezuela, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

² Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, DRC, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Nicaragua, Senegal, Serbia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Uganda, and Yemen.

obligation under the MBT, voluntary reporting might be very useful for both affected states and potential donor states and organizations, and could enhance support for VA. We also encourage states to report on their efforts on universalization.

Coming from an organization that works with mine victims in the field, I would like to express my appreciation for those affected countries that give detailed information on their VA activities. Some examples of good practices are the recent report submitted by Afghanistan, with extensive updates on activities, as well as the initial reports submitted by Somalia and South Sudan, which provided detailed data on casualties and their victim assistance plans. Other states should do likewise, making sure to explain how victims and their representative organizations have been involved in decision-making processes. Reports should also make clear how funding has been used, including the impact of activities on the lives of victims, in order to make a case for further cooperation.

Currently the lack of information on the needs of victims in most states, and in particular those in remote areas, makes it hard to have a full picture of progress. It also makes it difficult to track the results of support mainstreamed through broader development programs.

Donor states should also give more information on their support for the treaty's implementation, including the range of ways they are supporting victim assistance, South-South cooperation and in-kind support.

The comprehensive roadmap Belgium outlined should help to increase the rate of compliance with Article 7 and can enhance the quality of reporting. The ICBL will continue to encourage all States Parties to make reporting an effective instrument to free the world of mines and improve support for the victims.

Thank you.