

Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

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Geneva, 5 February 2015

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Presentation on the review of the Vientiane Action Plan

Review of the Vientiane Action Plan

VIII. International cooperation and assistance

Submitted by the President to the Fifth Meeting of States Parties

Key messages

1. With the aim to address the right of each State party to seek and receive assistance and benefit from international cooperation and assistance as stipulated in the Convention, States Parties recognized the need to further develop partnerships that could contribute to an effective and timely implementation of all the provisions under the Convention in the elaboration of the Vientiane Action Plan and outlined concrete targets and measurable steps in terms of joint actions that could monitor progress against specific obligations on stockpile destruction, clearance and in assisting victims undertaken in with the cooperation and assistance of partners.

2. Formal and informal meetings of the Convention on Cluster Munitions represent great opportunities for all stakeholders including states, the United Nations, NGOs, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to outline the scope for cooperation and in highlighting particular areas of concern and for affected States to also present potential technical and financial shortfalls that could jeopardize effective implementation. In addition, transparency reports under Article 7 represent a particularly good opportunity for States to elaborate on their needs for support in filling gaps but also, when doing so, to include more specifically, the plans for such assistance and the variety of means which could assist in fulfilling these gaps.

Scope

3. Throughout the past five years, the cooperation between States Parties and experts organisations have been dense as most States Parties have reported to be cooperating with national and international experts organisations and/or the United Nations in stockpile destruction, clearance and victim assistance activities.

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4. Since the entry into force, a number of affected States Parties have identified needs and reported in formal and informal meetings on such needs: of the 16 States Parties that have reported to have or had obligations under Article 4, eight have highlighted assistance needs in clearance and/or risk reduction; of the 34 States Parties that have reported to have or had obligations under Article 3, eight have highlighted assistance needs in stockpile destruction and of the 12 States Parties that have reported to have obligations under Article 5 on victim assistance, seven have highlighted assistance needs.

Progress

5. To support States in meeting their obligations under the Convention, 27 States as well as a numerous of other experts organisations have provided financial, technical or material assistance. Furthermore, among activities and suggestions from the Coordinators of international cooperation and assistance since entry into force, there is the publication in 2012 of a catalogue on best practices on cooperation and assistance, the gathering of experts at intersessional meetings to highlight south-south and triangular cooperation and discussions on a launch of an online electronic portal for the exchange of information with regards to requests for and offers of support similar to the one established within the framework of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

6. States and expert organisations have used formal and informal meetings to exchange information and experiences and to promote technical cooperation, through panel discussions and presentations by technical experts and have shared information on methodologies that may reduce the time and projected costs of stockpile destruction and clearance. However, despite this fruitful collaboration, the issue of the unpredictability of funds and short-term financing of the programme have been highlighted as a key issue for the fulfilment of the Convention's obligation.

Challenges highlighted since the First Meeting of States Parties

7. States Parties in need of international cooperation and assistance have in general not been specific enough when communicating their needs under Article 3, 4 and/or 5, often leaving out the plans indicating the activities and timeframes for which support is needed and sought.

8. Furthermore, States have maintained a quite narrow spectrum and definition of means of cooperation and assistance which ideally should consist not only in the mobilization of financial resources from donors, but also the sharing and transfer of skills, expertise, experiences as well as the dissemination of lessons learned and facilitation of technical exchanges.

Recommendations

9. For further practical, time bound and purposeful guidance in the implementation of the Convention, and further to the legal obligations under Article 6, particular efforts should be considered to encourage early identification of challenges and engagement with relevant expert organisations, and other States Parties that may be in a position to assist in addressing these challenges.

10. States Parties and expert organisations should be encouraged to develop and share innovative solutions and promising practices on international cooperation and assistance

including: multi-year support agreements to provide predictability and ensure sustainability of programmes; “cooperation partnerships” that entail closer and more systematic contact between donor and affected States in order to build national capacity and ownership; a greater emphasis on results-oriented programming with increased monitoring and evaluation elements; and third-party support for south-south assistance.

11. States parties should also strive to ensure that the cluster munitions related activities of the UN, national and international non-governmental organisations and other actors, where relevant, are incorporated into national planning frameworks and are consistent with national priorities and international obligations. Over time, major changes in donor policies and priorities may become evident that should be identified and taken into account in the strategic planning for cooperation and assistance measures under the CCM.

12. Cost-effective approaches to the implementation of the Convention should be promoted in order to ensure the best possible use of resources. For example, by properly investing in the identification of cluster munition contaminated areas, clearance will proceed much faster and therefore be less expensive. Low-cost and low-tech methods have also been developed to help States parties without industrial stockpile destruction capabilities to meet their obligations in a timely manner. By demonstrating application of efficient approaches to implementation, the approaches by States Parties requiring assistance will be more attractive to potential donors.

13. All relevant actors should continue to strengthen the partnerships between affected and non-affected States Parties, and among affected States Parties as well as between States Parties and experts organisations, to identify and mobilize new technical, material and financial sources of cooperation and assistance.

14. All relevant actors should ensure that assistance is based on appropriate surveys, needs assessment and analysis, including an emphasis on gender and age specific requirements. Requirements for capacity-building as well as development-related requirements should be identified; a proper transition from assisted to self-reliant strategies is essential to ensure the sustainability of more long-term activities, in particular in the area of victim assistance, which requires lifelong commitments to those affected and which should therefore be integrated into the broader national development, socio-economic and disability frameworks.

15. It has been noted that given the wide variety of support that may be offered (i.e., technical, material, or financial), many States are indeed in a position to provide assistance, and affected States in particular should be encouraged to share their expertise, good practices, and technical support in this regard. Furthermore, based on the experience of other Coordinators, the Coordinators on cooperation and assistance, stockpile destruction, clearance and victim assistance, should develop Geneva-based initiatives promoting cooperation through i.e., workshops with linguistically cohesive groups or with otherwise shared common interests.