

High Level Segment

Agenda Item Six

Mr. President, Your Royal Highness, Excellencies...ladies and gentlemen,

At the onset I would like to congratulate you Ambassador Brattskar and the Norwegian Foreign Ministry for hosting us all and for the very fine job that you are doing at presiding over the Fourth Review Conference of the APMBC. It is truly an honour to be back in Oslo among so many old friends.

As time is short I will endeavor to be as brief as I can. My country would like to say a few words of encouragement to all the States Parties that have been granted extension requests to their Article 5 obligations and who are presently executing the clearance plans that they submitted, as well as to the States that are intending to seek extensions in the near future. You have to make sure that you are doing/going to do what you say you are going to do. Nobody says that demining and all that goes with it is easy...on the contrary...it is a very hard slog, it is complicated, time consuming, labour intensive, expensive and potentially 'of course' dangerous...but also it is a solemn commitment that you have made...and it is doable, manageable...**it is a must** that can be achieved if your approach is serious. Funding of course, is always a problem but this too can be overcome in most cases if States take real ownership over the issue. As we look at the list of States Parties that have been granted extensions...not only is the list increasing in number...which is not a good sign...but many of the States are not on track to fulfilling their extension obligations. Why is this

the case? What does this say about the Convention? Have we taken our eye off the ball?

The same applies to Stockpiles! Again...why is this the case and what should our response be?

As for Victim Assistance...we all need to do a lot more and a lot better...my country included. In most mine affected States...the victims/survivors and their families have been waiting for a very long time for some type of restitution and are yearning to enjoy their rights as citizens on par with everyone else. This can only be achieved by focusing and implementing systematically the Convention but also and most importantly the articles of the CRPD (to which the vast majority of States Parties are party). In other words a twin track approach. This is what we have been trying to achieve in Jordan with some success. Our hope is that once our new 'Law for the Rights of Person's with Disabilities' (legislated in 2017) is duly implemented, in conjunction with continued direct support...that our survivors will increasingly bear the fruits of our efforts. Again...like clearance...VA is very hard work, demanding, never-ending and costly...but at the same time is incredibly rewarding, doable, manageable, **and simply a must**, that can be achieved if the national approach is serious.

On this issue I would like to take the opportunity to revive an old idea that was propagated long ago but unfortunately never saw the light of day. It is our belief that the time is right for the Convention to do things a little differently. We can't do the same thing over and over again and expect a different result. How can we guarantee that we won't be talking about the same general 'lack of initiative' (in relative terms) on VA among States Parties at the next Review Conference in five years time?

We think that the Convention should consider the idea of establishing regional funds for VA that can really make a difference in the lives of people. These funds would not support individuals per se but rather organizations that provide services and build capacity. We think this idea deserves consideration and if implemented correctly and successfully will really help close the circle and secure the Convention's good name for posterity.

Lastly...I would like to say just a few general comments regarding the Convention as a whole. No one can question or doubt the success of the APMBC...however it is our belief that we must avoid complacency and not rest on our laurels...at least not yet. It is incumbent on all of us to maintain the interest, health and stamina of the Convention for as long as it is conceivably possible. **We must remain ambitious and get the job done.** There are still millions of landmines in the ground in many corners of the world, millions of insidious mines stockpiled in warehouses that could be laid at a moments notice, and tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of victims (or survivors) who are yearning for their place in the sun. So...let us think differently, plan innovatively, implement expeditiously and better the lives of those who have suffered so tremendously.

I thank you all.