

Committee on Article 5 Implementation

(Austria, Canada, Colombia, **the Netherlands**)

Dear Colleagues,

It is a real pleasure to open the session on mine clearance.

The Netherlands has had the pleasure of Chairing the Committee on Article 5 Implementation over the course of 2019 working together with Austria, Canada and Colombia.

Over the last five years we have witnessed a lot of progress in the implementation of Article 5.

- We have seen States Parties that were heavily contaminated by anti-personnel mines, including Algeria, Mauritania and Mozambique, reach completion and several other States Parties move closer towards that goal.
- We have seen affected States Parties carry out important survey work to identify the precise perimeter of mined areas, allowing them to develop clear work plans for completion with concrete milestones. Other State Parties are in the process of achieving this goal.
- We have also gained a better understanding of the place of victim-activated improvised explosive devices within the Convention and the importance of States Parties addressing these weapons within the framework of the Convention, including by reporting these areas under Article 7, and addressing these areas in order to achieve the purpose of the Convention.
- We have also seen a number of States Parties updated their land release standards, policies and methodologies, in line with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and would encourage other states to do so to ensure that Article 5 commitments are carried out in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

Over the past years the Committee has had the opportunity to work closely with representatives of States Parties, Directors of National Mine Action Programmes, increasing the Committee's

engagement with the information submitted by the States Parties and taking advantage of every opportunity to hold bilateral meetings. We would like to thank all the States Parties for their important engagement with the Committee.

We believe that this engagement has allowed the Committee to gain a better understanding of the remaining challenge in affected States Parties, with an increasing number of Article 7 reports detailing progress in achieving mine clearance obligations of the Convention being submitted. We have also seen an important positive trend in the quality of these reports with more and more States employing the Guide to Reporting.

With this said, there are States Parties that have not submitted information on progress in implementation on an annual basis and in some cases the information submitted makes it difficult to measure the progress made and the remaining challenge. We would like to remind State Parties of the importance of fulfilling their obligations of submitting Article 7 reports, including detailed information on implementation of Article 5. We also urge you to reach out to the Committee and to use the services provided by the Implementation Support Unit to support your reporting efforts.

We cannot stress enough the importance of our cooperative dialogue and the important of this dialogue being based on high quality information.

Last year the Committee also presented a paper entitled “Reflections and understandings on the implementation and completion of Article 5 mine clearance obligations”, which provides important information concerning questions pertaining to the implementation of Article 5 and highlights several decisions made by the Meeting of States Parties/Review Conferences related to Article 5. We believe this is an important document that brings the key understanding of the States Parties together in one document. The Committee will continue providing guidance to the States Parties in this regard.

While progress has been made, the Committee observes that several States Parties continue to face challenges in implementing their Article 5 commitments due to a number of factors including large areas pending to be addressed, funding challenges and security concerns. We also

understand that in some cases, in addition to anti-personnel mines, a number of States Parties face challenges associated with other explosive remnants of war and UXOs. While we strive to overcome these challenges we must put in place efforts to ensure the safety of the population, ensuring that they are provided with the necessary information to protect themselves from the threat of mines and that they are provided with the support necessary to alter any behaviour that puts them at risk in an age and gender sensitive manner taking into account the diverse needs of the community and prioritizing the most vulnerable. I am referring here to mine risk education and other mine risk reduction programmes, that play a crucial role, next to clearance itself, in limiting the number of victims. As the Convention is developing, I am pleased to see that more attention is paid to this field of mine action as well. We will need to step up our efforts in this field, as is reflected in the draft Oslo Action Plan.

Dear colleagues, 20 years after the entry into force, the international community has all the necessary lessons learned to implement this core obligation of the Convention of mine clearance in an efficient and effective manner. Let us share our challenge and find the relevant solutions as a family of States Parties.

We are looking forward to a wealth of success stories in the near future. I am certain that together we can achieve a mine free world.

Last but not least, I thank my members of the Committee Austria, Canada and Colombia for their hard work and dedication to this issue, to all the States Parties we have had the opportunity to work with over the course of the year, to the Implementation Support Unit, to mine action operators and to the deminers who risk their lives every day to make our world a safer place.

