

Daily Update Friday 4 December

The Cartagena Summit on a Mine Free World, the Second Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty, concluded Friday, 4th December 2009. The high-level segment continued for the second and last day, with senior government officials, states not party, observer and other delegations delivering statements and signing the Cartagena Declaration.

Following on from Thursday, statements continued to assess the progress made in implementing the Mine Ban Treaty, emphasizing thematic areas such as clearance, stockpile destruction, victim assistance, international cooperation, and universalization. Creating synergies with the CPRD and the CCM was again a prominent theme, as well as statements from countries emphasizing the importance of linking mine action and development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the important role of civil society.

On victim assistance, **Italy** pledged that it intended to give added attention to VA projects and that as long as there was one victim of antipersonnel mines, its commitment would not falter. **Austria**, true to its role as champion of VA, also delivered a strong statement emphasizing the importance of victim assistance, in particular socio-economic inclusion of victims and national ownership, in implementing the MBT and building synergies with the CPRD and CCM.

France, Mexico, Tunisia, Ecuador and Senegal noted the importance of mine action to broader development and peacebuilding work. France stated it would work to integrate fulfilling obligations on landmines, cluster munitions, and explosive remnants of war into its development strategies. Ecuador shared its experience of cooperative demining with Peru on clearing mines on their shared border as a lessons learned opportunity for successful peacebuilding.

Algeria, Tunisia, Laos, and UNDP added their voices to those who spoke yesterday emphasizing the nexus between implementing the obligations of the MBT and achieving the MDGs. Tunisia stated that the use of antipersonnel mines is not compatible with the MDGs, and along these lines, military budgets should be reallocated to demining activities and activities related to economic growth and development, instead of an arms race at the expense of the needs of the population.

A number of states underscored the importance of international cooperation and assistance, with **Iraq, Laos, Zimbabwe, and Angola** specifically appealing for assistance from the international community, and Angola making a direct request for assistance to implement VA objectives. Zimbabwe made an ardent appeal for international assistance, stating that economic sanctions had affected mine action.

Four donor states (**Japan, the UK, the Netherlands, and Slovakia**) gave interventions mentioning their commitments to providing assistance. Japan gave a strong intervention focusing solely on the assistance it provided under the MBT, emphasizing the importance of South-South triangular cooperation.

The UK announced that in 2009 it contributed 10 million GBP to demining globally, to some of the world's poorest countries, with a focus on achieving maximum impact. The UK pledged a three-year commitment of over 30 million GBP, to focus on clearance, capacity building, and 'improving the value for money' in mine action.

The Netherlands stated it would contribute 15 million euro annually in the coming years to mine action and said it offered an additional 4.5 million euro to UNMAS only yesterday.

Slovakia stated that it was best placed to fill a niche in contributing to the implementation of the MBT in providing assistance for explosive ordnance disposal training and the development and production of demining equipment.

On national implementation, Slovakia was the second state during the Conference, after the Czech Republic yesterday, to comment on issues of interpretation on the definition of anti-personnel mine. Slovakia said that the debate should continue in the Mine Ban Treaty and expressed its hope that the use of sensitive-fuzes for arming antipersonnel mines would not lead to another wave of humanitarian challenges; however it was a matter of

principle that the decisive factor is a matter of affect and not a matter of design, Slovakia said. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UNICEF, UNDP, the Organization of American States Program, the GICHD, and Red Cross Red Crescent Federations also spoke as observers.

Observer States were generally positive towards the MBT but did not provide new information on plans to accede to the treaty. **Nepal** gave a brief account of its progress on demining, which it plans to complete with the help of UNMAS in 2011. Nepal stated that it acted in-line with many of the objectives of the MBT and would continue to support with the international community the objective of a mine free world, but gave no indication of when it would join the treaty. Nepal however stated for the first time publicly that it does not produce antipersonnel mines.

Laos described its 'preparations to meet all obligations of the MBT,' including national steps on demining, workshops to promote awareness of the treaty, instructions to military personnel on compliance, voting in favor of the UNGA resolution on the treaty, and stated it was in process of drafting a voluntary Article 7 report to help the world understand better the facts and reality on the ground and the design and intention of Lao PDR - and that it was confident it would be able to become a party to the treaty in coming years. Lebanon stated that it signed the Oslo Convention and hoped to accede the Ottawa Convention in the future and that it never produced or exported anti-personnel mines and confirmed its belief in the treaty and its noble objectives and called for support from the UN and international community.

Poland reiterated that it hoped to ratify the MBT in 2012 while China stated it was still not in a position to accede to the treaty, but appreciated the humanitarian spirit enshrined in the Convention and endorsed its goals. China stated that it supported resolving the problem of antipersonnel mines within the CCW. China however noted its vote in favor of the UNGA Resolution on the treaty and stated it was committed to cooperation with the MBT States Parties and international organizations.

While most observer States expressed solidarity with the spirit and objective of the MBT, leave it to **Cuba** to provide some variety and ruffle some feathers - Cuba stated that it would not be able to change its policy on antipersonnel mines, which it considered necessary for its legitimate right of self-defense, due to the sustained policies of the US. Cuba expressed its support for the CCW, which it said unlike Ottawa bears in mind the military interest of states.

Many more states added to those from yesterday in support of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, giving updates on progress towards ratification, and calling for on those who had not signed or ratified to do so.

South Africa, Austria, and Croatia emphasized the opportunities to build synergies between the MBT, the CPRD, and the CCM. The UK stated it would ratify the CCM early next year, adding that the CCM and MBT were key humanitarian tools to protect civilians, especially children, during and after conflicts.

Lithuania stated that in November 2009 it submitted its ratification instrument to parliament, although unfortunately noted the importance it placed on the negotiation of a legally binding Protocol on cluster munitions in the CCW and its hopes for quick agreement. The Netherlands however stated that the success of the MBT negotiation process and implementation showed the role of multilateral disarmament negotiations, wherein consensus was no longer the only model.

Cameroon listed its history of supporting the Oslo process at each phase of the international conferences, stating it was proud to announce internal processes had been completed to allow for Cameroon to sign the CCM in November 2009, but did not mention progress on internal procedures to complete signature of the CCM or ratification.

Montenegro announced that its parliament had recently ratified the CCM and would deposit shortly. **Zimbabwe** stated it was in process of submitting the instrument to allow for domestic ratification of the CCM, while **Tanzania** said it had commenced its ratification process. **Iraq** referred to its signature of the Convention last month, saying that despite the conditions it currently experiences, Iraq diligently seeks to rid the country of all ERW and has drawn up plans for mine removal and VA.

Laos called on all states to sign and ratify the CCM to ensure its early entry into force and welcomed all to be States Parties at the first MSP in Vientiane.

The Foreign Minister of Colombia and an emotional President Susan Echekey gave closing remarks for the Conference, with Amb. Echekey inviting the Youth Forum Leaders participants to give the final statement of the Cartagena Summit. Thirty-five youth leaders from around the globe filled the stage, while Ndèye-Khoudia Ndiaye from France and Gul Nabi from Afghanistan delivered the Youth Declaration to the Conference.

Noting that it is the youth who are disproportionately affected by landmines and cluster munitions and other ERW, despite neither producing these weapons nor perpetrating the conflicts in which they are used, the Youth Forum representatives called on states and international civil society to provide space and opportunities for the youth to be involved in the work towards a mine-free world, as youth involvement is crucial in the success of the Treaty, particularly with the sustainability of the work on the ground.

In a poignant conclusion to the Cartagena Summit, President Echekey stated that as young people were the future, 'we will call on you to hold us accountable' and presented the youth leaders with the two copies of Cartagena Declaration, signed by the ministers and high-level officials throughout the past two days, as a sign of her gratitude that the MBT commitment is shared by a new generation.

The success of the week was clearly seen in the recommitment and rededication from governments and NGOs alike. States have agreed to an ambitious five year action plan at the outcome of the week, although we won't know the true measure of success from Cartagena for a few years to come, until we see the number of commitments made turn into accomplishments - and a lot of that depends on us!

Highpoints of the Summit were the declarations of four states (Rwanda, Albania, Zambia, and Greece) that they are now mine-free and the prominence placed on victim assistance this week, a reflection of hard work being done on VA in both the context of the MBT and the CCM. It was positive also that controversial issues such as the extension requests made during the week were not rubber-stamped by States Parties, crucial to credibility of process.

There were some serious disappointments, however, with Ukraine stating it will miss its upcoming stockpile destruction deadline, and could take 5 years to complete it, which is a grave concern for the treaty. The three states in violation of their stockpile destruction obligations (Belarus, Greece, and Turkey) also could not set firm deadline for completion of their stockpile destruction. Too many states likewise said they were in danger of failing to clear contaminated areas by their deadlines and many that received extensions just one year ago are not on track to meet their planned demining targets.

Yet overall, the Cartagena Summit laid a strong foundation for progress over the next five years with an ambitious but flexible road map and progress will be reviewed every year. It's now up to us to ensure that the goals are met and exceeded.

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