



European Union
Statement by

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Second Preparatory Meeting for the Maputo Review Conference

Agenda Item 5

Geneva, 10 April 2014

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

**European Union Speaking Points for the
Second Preparatory Meeting for the Maputo Review Conference,
10th April 2014, Geneva**

Agenda item 5: Exchange of views on the draft Maputo Action Plan

Introduction

The European Union warmly congratulates you, Your Excellency, on the work done so far in preparation of the Third Review Conference on the Ottawa Convention. We praise the open and transparent spirit in which you have conducted the works in order to prepare this meeting.

We would also like to thank you and the ISU for organising this second preparatory meeting allowing all parties to exchange views on the draft documents circulated to further advance our discussions for a successful outcome of the Maputo Review Conference.

The Draft Maputo Action Plan that you submitted is in our view a very good basis for our discussions today. It is short, clear and focuses on substantial developments and targeted and implementable actions, which are important conditions for success in EU views.

Allow me Mr President to offer some comments on specific points:

We recognise that all states parties should be seeking to complete their time-bound obligations as early as possible, in accordance with existing treaty obligations.

- Item I: Universalising the Convention

After the accession of Poland in June 2013, all EU Member States are united under the Convention, bringing the "Ottawa community" to 161 members.

The Maputo Action Plan must reiterate a clear commitment to our task of promoting the universal accession of all States to the Convention. It is essential to continue the efforts to convince the last countries to join the Convention so that our goal of a world free of the impact of anti-personnel mines can be reached. Accession to a legally binding instrument is an important step towards this objective.

While continuing our overall efforts towards full universalisation of the Convention, at the Maputo Conference, States Parties should however also systematically examine possible opportunities for the effective implementation of concrete measures by States that are not

yet Parties to the Convention, but still promoting the adherence to at least individual norms of the Convention; this would contribute, at least to some extent, to our ultimate goal of ending the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.

Inter alia, such measures could include political commitments not to transfer and/or produce anti-personnel mines. Moreover, some States not yet Parties to the Convention might be willing to take some transparency measures or to destroy some, or even all, of their anti-personnel mines.

Recalling that in Maputo in 1999 at the 1st Meeting of the State Parties, those State Parties declared that “as a community dedicated to seeing an end to the use of anti-personnel mines, our assistance and cooperation will flow primarily to those who have foresworn the use of these weapons forever through adherence to and implementation of the convention”, concrete opportunities for international cooperation with States not yet party to the Convention should primarily be targeted at those States that significantly support practical mine action, taking into account that each country will allocate its aid on the basis of its own priorities and principles, and fundamentally on the basis of the greatest need.

- Item III: Mine Clearance

As an important provider of support in the clearance of anti-personnel mines in mined areas, we believe that further concrete guidance is needed on the identification of priorities, criteria for clearance and measurable outcomes to ensure well targeted action, sustainable results and the best added value, also in view of the broader development aims of the countries concerned.

- Item IV: Victim Assistance

The EU has always paid great attention to victim assistance under the Antipersonnel Landmine Ban Convention. The Convention’s norms on victim assistance are the clearest expression of the humanitarian spirit which drove the conclusion of the treaty. Victim assistance is one of the four priority areas the EU is advancing under Council Decision 2012/700/CFSP in support of the Cartagena Action Plan.

Important progress on providing adequate assistance to anti-personnel mine victims has undoubtedly been achieved and the Convention has been playing a crucial role in this regard. However, more efforts are needed in order to ensure adequate assistance to anti-personnel mine victims and other victims according to their needs.

The EU supports the focus that the draft Maputo Action Plan puts on national plans and policies for disability, health, social services, education, employment, poverty reduction and development to ensure, within this broader framework in an integrated manner, that the rights and needs of anti-personnel mine victims and other victims, including survivors, affected families and communities, are fully taken care of.

The EU supports the focus that the draft Maputo Action Plan puts on the integration of victim assistance into broader national policies and supports the implementation and monitoring of this by State Parties with victims setting time bound and measureable victim assistance objectives.

The EU highlights the need for a close cooperation between states, international and regional organisations and civil society in turning victim assistance provisions into concrete measures on the ground that make a real difference to the lives of survivors, affected families and communities. The EU welcomes the ICRC and the ICBL engagement on this work.

The EU particularly emphasizes the importance of the full participation of survivors in the decision-making and policy-making on issues affecting them (“nothing about us without us”).

In the future machinery paper, a proposal is made to create an explicit mandate for enabling the Convention to reach out to other international and regional fora active in the various areas of relevance for assistance to anti-personnel mine victims, such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the WHO, and the ILO and many others. The EU notes this interesting proposal, and welcomes efforts to ensure victims are supported through ensuring all people with disabilities are given equal access to society.

- Item V: International Cooperation and Assistance

While further promoting the principle of national ownership in mine action, the Maputo Action Plan should include concrete measures to further improve effective and inclusive donor coordination among all actors in the field and cooperation with countries requiring and seeking assistance, donors, implementing agencies and civil society organizations. The setting-up of a comprehensive approach to clearance and victim assistance should also be requested from the affected states in order to enhance sustainability and effectiveness.

The EU Council Decision in support of the implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan refers to different actions to be taken by the EU as far as international cooperation and assistance is concerned, and the EU intends, in due time and based on the final Action Plan

to be agreed in Maputo, to consider ways and means of maintaining its supportive approach towards priority areas, inter alia with regard to victim assistance and risk education. Sustainability of efforts, being them financial or taking other forms, is in our views crucial to effective completion of commitments.

Taking into account that anti-personnel mine issues and mine action is often a cross-border problem, the EU considers that it would be relevant to reinforce the work between international organizations that may develop parallel projects in the same areas, thus making those actions more cost-efficient. We recall the very effective cooperation launched in Berlin between the EU and the SADC and that even before the Convention. It is high time we try to replicate it.

The EU is looking forward to continuing the close and constructive cooperation established throughout the last months in order to support you and your team, the ISU and all delegations, to achieve a successful outcome of the Maputo Conference.

- Item VI: Transparency and the exchange of information.

Transparency has been since the beginning and remains a fundamental condition to the success of the Ottawa Convention, as it creates the conditions for building trust between states parties, one key element of the unique spirit of the Convention.

With a view to our experience on reporting, several challenges persist concerning both the low rate of reporting as well as with regards to the type and quality of the information provided. These issues concern amongst other the availability of relevant information to monitor progress on victim assistance.

Additional initiatives, including outreach activities, should therefore be provided for timely and meaningful reporting, which effectively supports the full implementation of the Convention's provisions.

Efforts to increase reporting also need to focus better on those States Parties that have obligations to fulfil and are in the process of implementing key provisions of the Convention.

To tackle the various issues related to achieving effective transparency, the following specific suggestions should be examined for possible inclusion in the Maputo Action Plan: the introduction of provisions for simplified ways of submitting relevant information (notably for state parties that have nothing new to report), the setting up of a more formal and interactive feedback system in response to the information provided (every year, selected state parties could present their national implementation activities), the

introduction of possibilities for further consolidated reporting, and the future use of additional reporting templates.

Thank you Mr. President-Designate.