

### **3 Review Conference**

#### **Transparency Measures**

##### **Intervention by Belgium, Coordinator of the Contact Group**

Mr President,

A review conference not only establishes the action plan guiding our work for the next five years, but also offers the opportunity to assess the results of what have been done and achieved during the last five years.

Allow me to present this review in the field of reporting, mainly based on the evaluation of the “Roadmap for a Better Reporting and Exchange of Information”. As you will recall, Belgium in its capacity of Coordinator of the Contact Group for Article 7 Reporting, proposed at the 12MSP this document, containing clear objectives and concrete actions to enhance reporting within the Convention. On a quantitative and qualitative level.

The roadmap stated, and I quote, “the third Review Conference of 2014 will be the natural limit of the objectives as it gives us the opportunity to evaluate the commitments in the field of reporting contained in the Cartagena Action Plan and to propose new actions for the next Action Plan based on the feedback of this paper”.

Referring to the last part of this quote, we welcome the inclusion of most of the objectives and actions of the Roadmap in the draft Maputo Action Plan and the proposed decision related the implementation machinery. Indeed, in addition of the three actions under the reporting chapter, four other actions refer directly or indirectly to the annual reporting mechanism.

Other actions proposed in the Roadmap have been translated in the proposed new implementation machinery, stressing the importance of reporting as a management tool.

But first, since this is an annual tradition, facts and figures. At the first Review Conference in Nairobi, in 2004, more than 80 % of the States Parties submitted their annual update report. At that time it was considered benefiting from, what we could call, the Review Conference effect. This year, for reporting year 2013, the reporting rate is hardly at 50 %. Unfortunately, no review Conference effect, this year. Since the Cartagena Summit, reporting rate was annually around a dramatic low 60% . And this despite all efforts from different stakeholders : reminder letters have been sent, we had bilateral meetings and assistance was proposed to States Parties encountering difficulties in submitting their reports. These efforts should be maintained.

Two States Parties are late, for many years, with their initial report: we urge them to comply without delay with the provisions of Article 7 of the Convention. Because, let there be no doubt about that, reporting is a legal obligation!

Action 25 of the draft Maputo Action Plan mentions the possibility for States Parties to use the simplified tools for fulfilling their Article 7 obligations. We encourage States Parties in a position to do so to take use of this possibility.

Finally, States not party to the Convention can submit a report on a voluntary basis. By doing so they can show transparency in their adherence to the principles of this Convention. This year, we welcomed the voluntary reports from Palestine and an affected region, giving a clear state of play of the mine problem and the actions undertaken to address it.

But, Mister President, we did not only focus on the figures for the last five years. The roadmap also aimed to increase the quality of the submitted reports and to raise awareness about the importance of transparency for the implementation of the Convention.

At the 2013 intersessional meetings, a presentation was made about reporting on Article 5. This was a useful experience that can be continued in a modified way at the next meetings for other thematic issues. Practical workshops on reporting, with the input from actors in the field, can be of great use for some States Parties.

We also observed that States Parties had questions about the use of reporting since there is no feedback mechanism foreseen in the Convention. Therefore, we warmly welcome the provisions foreseen in the proposed decisions on the new machinery for the Committee on Article 5 implementation. I quote Par 2 of the document: The committee will fulfil its purpose by providing feedback to States Parties having submitted information on “location of all mined areas that contain, or are suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines”.

Providing feedback on submitted information and providing advice and support in a cooperative way will certainly encourage States parties to provide complete and accurate information.

In Action 13 and 14 of the draft MAP States Parties engage in doing their utmost to provide information on the implementation of the assistance to victim as foreseen in the Cartagena Action Plan. To assist them in fulfilling this commitment, it could be useful to update the tools at their disposal. The Victim Assistance chapter in the reporting guide can be completed and adapted. We could also consider the possibility of a specific reporting form on Victim Assistance if needed.

Mister President,

Let me conclude by saying that progress has been made in the field of reporting. This might seem contradictory to what figures are showing. Indeed, the reporting rate has never been that low in the history of the Convention. Not reporting is not complying with Article 7. It is that simple. We should go on with our efforts to urge States to fulfil this obligation.

But as we used to say : reporting is not only an obligation, but also a tool and an opportunity. And that's where the progress has been made. We therefore warmly welcome the inclusion of the objectives and actions of the Roadmap in this field in the draft Action plan and in the proposed decisions on the implementation machinery. Bringing reporting into the different thematic issues has always been our objective.

But we are well aware that the implementation of these actions will be a challenge. This implementation should be coherent with the overall reporting mechanism and well-coordinated.

Therefore, Belgium is ready to continue to share its experience from the last decade in the field of reporting with the future members of the different committees and to support their work related to the implementation of their responsibilities regarding reporting.

Finally, I would like to seize the opportunity to thank all States Parties, international organizations and civil society that participated in the contact group meetings and that contributed to the work that have been done for a better exchange of information.

Muito obrigado, senhor presidente