

Mine Ban Convention
Second Preparatory Meeting – 10 April 2014
Proposed post-Third Review Conference Machinery and Meetings

Mr President-designate

Australia commends Mozambique's efforts in articulating some innovative ideas on how we can better manage and organise our work under this Convention in the period after the Third Review Conference.

The time is ripe to learn from the past fifteen years of this Convention's implementation in order to revitalise our efforts going forward. As you say in your paper, States Parties have shown flexibility before. Such flexibility should continue and we should not be afraid to re-focus and evolve our working methods.

The proposed implementation structure, which would replace the current structure of five Standing Committees, has the potential to better support the exchange of information, consultation and cooperation amongst States Parties.

We support your goal to revitalise the implementation machinery so that our work at future Meetings of States Parties and Review Conferences are well-prepared and focussed on the challenges that remain to achieve our collective goal to mitigate the humanitarian impact of anti-personnel landmines.

Mr President-designate

Australia supports the proposed Committee on cooperative compliance. As demonstrated in previous meetings, States Parties already undertake work collectively, but in an ad-hoc manner, to address concerns brought to their attention regarding non-compliance, particularly relating to the use of anti-personnel landmines. We welcome a proposal aimed at improving the management by States Parties of such work.

In our view, the proposal is consistent with the commitment of States Parties under Article 8(1) "to consult and cooperate with each other regarding the implementation of the provisions of the Convention, and to work in a spirit of cooperation to facilitate compliance by states parties with their obligations under this Convention".

Article 8(1) provides States Parties with a degree of flexibility to consult and cooperate to help facilitate compliance by whatever means they collectively consider would be useful, before the specific procedures that follow in Article 8(2) to (20) need to be invoked. Therefore, we see the value in pursuing opportunities to implement Article 8(1) more effectively, through a Committee on cooperative compliance.

Mr President-designate

Australia recognises that while humanitarian demining will have an end point, the imperative of States to ensure the well-being of their populations, including mine victims, and to guarantee their rights, will remain a continuing State responsibility.

We sincerely appreciate the contribution of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance to the Convention's implementation to date. However, we see the potential to re-frame such work through a mechanism that supports both the work still needed within the Convention, and beyond that within the broader context of meeting the rights and needs of all individuals who are injured or who live with disabilities.

Therefore, we welcome the proposal for a Special Envoy of the States Parties on Assistance to Landmine Victims to provide outreach to broader domains (such as health care, disability and human rights, development, poverty reduction, and employment), as well as coordinating the ongoing work to support States Parties that are responsible for the well-being of mine victims.

We would like to further explore this proposal, as well as the support that the Special Envoy might require from an Experts' Forum on Victim Assistance or whether such work would be better facilitated by the proposal put forward by Austria and Costa Rica today. Perhaps these two proposals are not too far apart.

Mr President-designate

Australia considers that the proposed implementation structure is developing in the right direction.

We welcome your emphasis in the paper that the new structure would need to be accountable to all States Parties. The future meeting programme, as a means for States Parties to stay informed of the work of the new machinery, is important for transparency.

Nonetheless, we should maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of our meeting time and resources. We agree that there will continue to be a need for annual formal meetings of States Parties. We welcome the proposal to reduce any intersessional meetings to no more than two days. However, we are firmly of the view that any intersessional meetings should only be convened if there is clear added value.

In streamlining the future meeting programme, and matching it to the new machinery that we may adopt in Maputo, intersessional meetings should only involve preparations and updates necessary to support the Convention's implementation, which cannot wait for the formal meetings and cannot be communicated effectively in another way (for example, by letter or email). It certainly should not simply be a repeat of the agenda of formal meetings.

With this in mind, we will continue to support further discussions and provide input on how a new implementation structure will function and add value, as well as the future meeting programme that States Parties will need to continue to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the Convention.

I thank you Mr President-designate.