

Switzerland's comments on draft meeting programme and implementation machinery
Second preparatory meeting to the Maputo RC
Geneva, 10 April

Mr. President,

I would like to thank you for the document you have circulated on a meeting programme and related implementation machinery. We certainly have made strong progress regarding this central element for the Review Conference since the 1st preparatory meeting of last December. This progress stems in large part from your effective leadership in steering the preparatory process and your relentless engagement, for which I am thankful.

As stressed in the introduction of the document, we certainly agree that the implementation machinery and meeting programme are a means to an end and not an end in themselves – their function is to enable us to address the challenges with regard to the implementation and the advancement of the convention. In this sense, the implementation machinery is in no small part linked to the action plan, and we welcome that this document has gradually evolved as the action plan was updated.

Consequently, we value the document you have circulated. It identifies the key components of the machinery and provides for a number of developments and proposals geared to enable the convention to address current and future challenges in an efficient way and in keeping with the cooperative nature of the convention.

If we have made strong progress, some proposals and elements of the document still need to be further evaluated and specified. In this context, I will make a few remarks of a general nature on various elements.

- The **clearance of ap mines** remains a central challenge in the implementation of the convention. The draft action plan articulates ambitious goals in this domain. In this context we welcome the proposal made in the document towards a greater formalisation or institutionalisation of the analysing group via the establishment of a Committee on article 5 implementation.

We see great value in the approach proposed and in particular its cooperative nature. This also applies to the fact that the proposal provides not only for assessing extension requests but also for ensuring that progress made is being monitored once the extension has been granted. Such a systematic feedback loop, completing the information shared on clearance at both informal and formal meetings, will certainly contribute to progress in the field of clearance and will be of mutual benefit to the affected States Parties, to the States Parties in a position to assist as well as the convention as a whole.

- On the issue of **compliance**, we also certainly see value in developing dedicated structures for States Parties to address the issue of **compliance with the Convention's prohibitions**.

We have taken duly note of the discussions that the proposal of establishing a committee on cooperative compliance have generated. These exchanges have been very fruitful. We welcome the resulting draft text. As highlighted in paragraph 17, the aim of

the proposed committee is simply to give practical shape to the implementation of article 8.1 of the convention in relation with the prohibitions spelled out in its article 1.1.

Such a mechanism has the capacity of significantly improving our work with regard to the issue of compliance. It would not only provide for an orderly process on issues of compliance, but also and most importantly, for a reinforcement of the cooperative nature of the convention.

- Regarding the question of **victim assistance**, we believe that it will be important that the Convention has the appropriate means to assist States in meeting their legal obligations under the Convention and their political commitments under previous and the forthcoming action plans.

In this context, we see a need for a more substantive structure than the currently suggested Experts Forum, for a structure which would be in a position to assist States in their implementation of the Maputo action plan. Accordingly, we would support the proposal made by different delegations regarding the establishment of a Committee on Victim assistance.

Such a committee seems necessary to us to enhance the focus on the commitments under the Convention. The co-operation with other instruments and mechanisms outside the Convention is undoubtedly important, but should not take precedence over the work to be done within the framework of the convention. Also, the forum suggested does not seem to be focused enough in terms of its activities, and also raises a number of questions regarding the financing of its activities.

- As far as the role and **composition of the coordinating committee**, we believe that it would be important that the possibility is ensured to continue to closely associate key institutions and civil society actors to its work.
- The last issue that I would like to address is that of the **purpose of the Conventions' meetings**. Regarding the intersessional meeting, we certainly share the viewpoint that they should be more focused and result oriented, yet retain the capacity to exchange informally on key issues for States parties.

In this context, we welcome the proposal made in the document and to organise intersessional meetings made up of a mid-term or preparatory segment to the MSP on the one hand, and of a thematic segment on the other. The preparatory segment would enable States parties to address the work conducted by the different committees. Concerning the thematic segment, it would provide space for informal exchange of ideas and expertise. If such exchanges have always been key for the convention, we are certainly beyond the need to address all thematic issues every year as we have been doing in the past years. As suggested, we should identify, either via the MSP or the coordination committee, the specific issues to be addressed in a particular year.

We are however of the view that the intersessional meetings should remain of an informal nature. We see great value in providing the possibility for States parties to engage informally on all issues related to the Convention. We are convinced that maintaining the informal nature of the intersessional meetings is also required by the cooperative nature of the machinery that we are collectively seeking to develop further to address future challenges. Providing for informal intersessional meetings will give us

the opportunity to exchange informally on the work of the different committees and their preliminary considerations. The meetings will also provide States parties directly concerned by the discussions of the committees with the possibility to informally express their viewpoint. This aspect appears to us relevant for the transparency and the co-operative nature of our common endeavor. Transforming the intersessional meeting in a reunion of a formal nature will require the adoption of a final report with potential recommendations or conclusions, an approach that may be contrary to the cooperative approach we seek to develop

Finally, we would support the many voices stressing that we have to build proximity and complementarity with other instruments when holding our intersessional meetings. As demonstrated by events this week, doing so has a number of positive effects, both in terms of maximising resources and benefiting from strong added value linked to the concurrent presence of specific expertise.

I thank you, Mr. President