

Highlights of a year's work

The Ottawa Convention's Standing Committees of Experts



At the First Meeting of States Parties in Maputo, Mozambique in May 1999, the Ottawa Convention's intersessional program was created "to focus and advance our mine action efforts and to measure progress made in achieving our objectives."

This intersessional program involved five thematic committees, each meeting twice between September 1999 and May 2000. The number of issues covered and actions taken by these committees has been impressive. What follows are some highlights of their work.

Implementing the Convention

The **General Status and Operation of the Convention Committee** has:

- ▼ evaluated the process of providing transparency reports under Article 7 of the Convention, proposed adjustments and encouraged compliance with this aspect of the Convention.
- ▼ increased clarification of matters related to mines retained for training and research under Article 3 of the Convention.
- ▼ initiated a process of examining issues related to the clarification of compliance under Article 8.
- ▼ made recommendations designed to streamline the post-Second Meeting of States Parties intersessional program.



Clearing mines

The **Mine Clearance Committee** has:

- ▼ reviewed work on revising international standards for mine clearance and efforts to develop guidelines for mine action, including guidelines on the use of the military in mine action.
- ▼ studied the implementation of recommendations made in the 1996-97 United Nations Report *Development of Indigenous Mine Action Capabilities*.
- ▼ recommended further exploring the impact of mine clearance on peace building and reconstruction.
- ▼ asked the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to draft a glossary of mine action terminology.



Developing technology

The **Technologies for Mine Action Committee** has:

- ▼ agreed on the importance of on-going dialogue between developers of mine action technologies and end users.
- ▼ saw a consensus emerge on the need for a "tool-box approach", involving the use of different combinations of mine clearance technologies and techniques according to local circumstances.
- ▼ recognized that while mine detection dogs (MDD) can be invaluable to mine clearance, measures should be taken to develop MDD accreditation procedures.
- ▼ noted the need to develop user-friendly mine action information technologies as well as recognizing progress made to this end through the development of the United Nations Mine Action Service/GICHD Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA).



Destroying stockpiles

The **Stockpile Destruction Committee** has:

- ▼ ensured that the mine action community is conscious of the importance of stockpile destruction in our integrated approach to addressing the global landmine problem.
- ▼ reviewed existing and potential sources of financial and technical assistance for stockpile destruction and discussed means to link donors and recipients.
- ▼ assessed overall progress in destroying global stockpiles.
- ▼ noted the merits and constraints of various methods of stockpile destruction.



Assisting victims

The **Victim Assistance and Mine Awareness Committee** has:

- ▼ promoted a *Portfolio of Victim Assistance Guidelines* as a single information resource on the full spectrum of victim assistance activities.
- ▼ recognized the usefulness of UNICEF's Mine Awareness Guidelines and recommended that they be integrated into efforts to develop broader mine action guidelines.
- ▼ raised awareness of the need for more effective reporting on support for victim assistance programs, according to the obligations under Article 6 of the Convention.

100 ratifications closer to a mine free world!

Since opening for signature and ratification in December, 1997, the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel mines has moved toward universalization with unprecedented speed, achieving 100 country ratifications in July 2000 after only 32 months!

Ratifications

Numbers in circles represent the number of ratifications

Time Line

