

Norwegian statement on clearance, 3MSP, Oslo

Thank you, Mr. President.

First I would like to thank the coordinators Laos and Ireland for their overview and Steinar Essen from Norwegian Peoples Aid for his interesting presentation.

The interventions we have heard from states today, show us that progress in the field is remarkably good. They also demonstrate that there is a lot of knowledge and experience on surveying, clearance and release of land present here today. In addition, they show us that the scope of the problem, with a few notable exceptions, at a global level is limited and that most of the affected states should be able to complete their article 4 obligations well within their deadlines: -Contaminated areas are being cleared much faster than we have expected; land is once again safe to use; future harm is prevented.

Realities in the field must be what guide our work within this Convention. Our approach to clearance must therefore have as a point of departure the concrete obstacles in the specific country.

However, there are some common principles that should guide the clearance work:

1. The resources must be spent as effectively and efficiently as possible. The available resources are limited and we must make the most of it.
2. The full range of available methods, tailored to address the actual problem at hand, must be employed. This includes the use of non-technical and technical survey as well as clearance.
3. Everything must be reported. No suspected contaminated land should be surveyed, cleared, cancelled or released without being reported and recorded in a national database. This must be done to ensure that there will be no duplication of effort now or in the future. It is important that commercial operators follow the same procedures as humanitarian operators – and that adherence to these procedures is a precondition for accreditation.
4. Such a national database must be the property of a national authority that needs this overview in order to plan and prioritize. We know from

the past that the cost of not having solid evidence bases for the clearance effort, too often have led to too much efforts, money and time being used on clearing uncontaminated land. In addition, surveying also builds confidence and provides safety by identifying the areas that pose a risk to civilians.

President,

As Norway has obligations under Article 4, allow me to update you on the situation at the former test firing range at Hjerkinn in Norway, which is contaminated by a limited number of cluster munitions remnants as well as other unexploded ordnance.

The Ministry of Defence estimates that clearance will be complete no later than 2013 as we have reported earlier. Norway will keep States Parties and others informed of the progress of this operation.

Thank you