

CCM ISM 16-19 April 2012

Summary of session on clearance of CMR 17 and 19 April 2012

I would like to thank all those who contributed to our discussions this week on clearance related issues and particularly to those who delivered presentations. These have provided us with very valuable information on the issue of clearance and plenty of food for thought with regard to what the States Parties to the CCM might do in order to expedite the clearance of cluster munition remnants.

We heard on Monday of the challenges facing our convention in advancing universalisation. Many of the states affected by cluster munition remnants have yet to join the convention. Enhancing progress on clearance is a demonstrable and practical benefit of CCM membership and of the practical relevance of our Convention. As States Parties we should consider carefully how the Convention can help to achieve such a demonstrable impact. The presentations we heard on Tuesday have added considerably to the knowledge and range of options available to us. It will take some time to digest the detail and scope of these presentations but I will attempt a brief summary of the highlights.

Mr Bounpone from UXO Lao gave us a timely update from the state party that is most affected by cluster munition contamination and provided a very useful summary of the innovations successfully introduced by UXO Lao to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of clearance operations and to improve the delivery of risk reduction education. It was especially interesting to learn of UXO Lao's continued commitment to explore new approaches including the use of dogs, the introduction of new detection technologies and the possible use of military deminers. It was also interesting to note the crucial role which UXO Lao have identified for Quality Management in the accomplishment of their clearance objectives and indeed an emphasis on Quality Management was a common theme across our presentations. Of interest also was the initiative to undertake trials of the District Focus Survey concept with three different operators in order to identify the best way forward.

Erik Tollefsen of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining provided us with a crisp concise overview of the role of technology in clearance operations. In particular he emphasised the importance of using the appropriate technology for the problem in hand and a reminder that technology proven in the area of mine clearance may not be best suited to cluster munition clearance. He also highlighted the

value of the precise calibration of detection equipments against the metallic signature of the target munitions and reminded us of the necessity for effective collaboration among donors, operators and manufacturers in order to ensure the best technological fit for the affected area.

Asa Gilbert also of the GICHD explained with great clarity how the concepts of land release based on non-technical survey and technical survey and the choice of appropriate detection methodologies can significantly enhance the speed of clearance. She also explained a simple and effective methodology for technical survey and its value in identifying and confirming hazardous areas.

Alexander Riebl of UNMAS speaking on behalf of his MINURSO colleague Diek Engelbrecht provided an interesting perspective on the clearance challenges in the unique terrain of Western Sahara. His presentation demonstrated the rapid progress made in that area once cluster munition clearance had been prioritised and once the appropriate technology such as Large Loop Detectors was acquired and deployed.

Atle Karlsen and Eva Weble of Norwegian Peoples Aid provided further evidence of the key role that effective survey plays in addressing the challenge of cluster munition clearance. We were shown excellent examples from the field of the effectiveness of technical survey methods. In the case of the Lebanon we were shown clear evidence of the value of accurate survey in a comparison of the clearance statistics for 2010 and 2011. In 2011 a substantial increase in the number of munitions cleared was achieved over a smaller area, due to the application of effective survey techniques.

Roman Tursic of the International Trust Fund provided a detailed overview of the different challenges experienced by affected states in South Eastern Europe and provided an optimistic outlook for the speedy completion of clearance in Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia in particular, while reminding us of the much greater threat presented by landmine contamination in the case of Bosnia Herzegovina.

Finally Tim Lardner of UNDP at present working in Lao PDR briefed us on the capacity building role which UNDP is playing in the clearance sector across 21 affected countries. He also provided a clear illustration of the concept of footprint of a cluster munition strike and how identification of that footprint followed by surface and then subsurface clearance was a key factor in land release methodologies.

In preparing the agenda for this segment the Joint Coordinators Lao PDR and Ireland suggested as a theme for their co-ordinatorship

Clearance of cluster munition remnants (CMR) can be accomplished and can be accomplished quickly.

The evidence presented by our expert contributors and reinforced by the national presentations from Croatia and Lebanon demonstrated that clearance can be accomplished quickly. This was evident from the experiences in Western Sahara, Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia, Lebanon and Lao despite the very different challenges specific to each case.

We also received clear guidance from the expert presenters on the importance of effective land release methodologies, of the choice of technology appropriate to the munitions and the terrain and the importance of acquiring comprehensive data on the problem.

We all need some time to digest this information and the next stage of our work will focus on developing a paper that can build effectively and logically on the excellent paper prepared last year by Australia and on the experience reflected in the valuable presentations we have heard at this meeting.

We have heard from operators in the field of the energising impact that the entry into force of the CCM has had already on the clearance community. The CCM States Parties need to maintain this momentum and ensure that the CCM continues to be a catalyst for new thinking in the area of clearance.

The CCM States Parties must look for ways in which we work smarter with the right technology to achieve better results. We will continue working with delegations on this basis to develop a working paper on clearance matters for the consideration of states parties.