

Ireland opening statement - clearance.

Second part :

From our conversations since Beirut and hearing the presentations and side events in Beirut we believe that the crucial task of clearance is one that can be achieved relatively speedily. There are States where the scale of contamination is such that they face a more significant challenge but as we heard in Beirut, and we shall hear later today, significant progress is being made. Techniques being developed in the field are evolving to increase efficiency in the identification of areas of contamination so that the areas identified as requiring clearance can be reduced and resources applied more efficiently.

As noted by my friend and fellow Coordinator, Khone, Action 15 of the Vientiane Action Plan invites States Parties to share best practices and lessons learnt with other States Parties and I hope that this session will provide us with an opportunity to hear from States Parties on their experiences. Also, last year in Beirut States Parties warmly welcomed the paper produced by Australia on the application of all available methods for the efficient implementation of Article 4 and encouraged States Parties to implement these recommendations. One of the recommendations contained in that paper was to encourage States Parties to review their approach to the identification and subsequent release of cluster munition-affected land. I hope that this morning's session will provide food for thought when these approaches are being reviewed.

The scale and nature of contamination varies from country to country but significant progress continues to be made each year in identifying and clearing land and returning it to communities whose safety, livelihoods and sense of security were severely impacted by the presence of cluster munition remnants. I am pleased that we will be joined this morning by operators involved in clearance operations in affected countries who have agreed to share their insights and experiences gained in the field. As their experience shows, there is continual refinement of techniques to reduce the areas which are suspected of being contaminated by cluster munition remnants so that clearance operations can focus on areas where contamination is present. These presentations will provide insights into clearance operations carried out in a variety of topographical conditions and where the degree of contamination and the information available to identify the areas of contamination varied.

This afternoon we look forward to hearing from States on the progress made in their identification of areas of contamination and the development of national clearance plans and at the same time hearing both the experiences gained and obstacles encountered in carrying out clearance operations. Following these I would like to open the floor to delegations to provide an update on their own national experiences, progress achieved to date and lessons learned.

Individual presentation introductions

Mr. Bounpone Sayasenh from UXO Lao will provide an update on developments in Lao PDR clearance ✓

Ms. Asa Glibert from GICHD will speak on Increased Efficiency in Survey and Clearance Operations ✓

Mr. Alexander Riebl will speak on the clearance of CM remnants in Western Sahara ✓

Mr. Atle Karlsen from Norwegian People's Aid will speak on the importance of survey in clearance operations in Lao PDR and Lebanon ✓

Mr. Roman Tursic of the International Trust Fund for Demining will speak on the standard procedures developed in the countries of former Yugoslavia for the clearance of cluster munition clearance ✓

Mr. Tim Lardner of the UNDP who is currently working in Lao PDR will address the topic of clearance of CM remnants ✓