

## **Informal Meeting on Enhancing International Cooperation and Assistance under the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), 8 June 2018**

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

On Friday 8 June 2018, Australia and Peru, CCM Coordinators on International Cooperation and Assistance, hosted an informal meeting in the margins of the 2018 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Meeting Intersessional Meetings.

In addition to the Coordinators and representatives of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU), approximately 16 representatives - 10 from potential donor/partner states and six from states with needs under the CCM - participated in the meeting. Participants discussed current reported cooperation and assistance needs and capacities, key points raised in informal meetings held on 24 November and 20 December 2017, and progress and next steps in operationalising Country Coalitions.

#### **1. KEY POINTS RAISED**

- Article 7 transparency reporting remained a key mechanism for sharing information on needs under the CCM and capacities to provide assistance to address those needs, but the rate and detail of reporting needed improvement.
- There should be caution about establishing a database for information sharing under the CCM given the difficulties with maintaining such databases experienced under other conventions. Bilateral engagement and Article 7 transparency reporting were preferable mechanisms.
- Two States Parties (Lebanon and Botswana) provided updates on the implementation of new initiatives which could be considered forms of Country Coalitions.
- One State Party (Chad) provided an update on its challenges under the CCM and its need for financing for a survey of suspected contaminated areas. It requested financial and technical assistance.
- Participating States supported the idea of an event on Country Coalitions at a future MSP, to highlight progress on the concept and provide a platform for States implementing the approach to highlight needs and priorities.

#### **2. DETAILED RECORD OF THE MEETING**

##### **2.1 Introductory Remarks:**

- Australia and Peru, CCM Coordinators on International Cooperation and Assistance, opened the meeting by explaining its background:
  - In 2017 the Coordinators held two informal meetings: with countries with possible needs for assistance under CCM and with partners with possible capacity to help meet those needs
  - The Coordinators undertook to bring those groups together for a final meeting

##### **2.2 ISU presentation on reported cooperation and assistance needs and capabilities:**

- Ms Sheila Mweemba, Director of the ISU, said:
  - 51 of 101 States Parties had provided 2017 Annual Reports as of that morning
  - Of the 51 States Parties who reported, 9 States Parties requested specific assistance in 2017, 18 reported to have provided assistance, 10 reported

receipt of assistance (it was not clear whether the assistance was received in response to a specific request).

- None of the donor States Parties reported providing assistance in response to a direct request.
- Of the 18 States Parties which provided assistance, five had reduced their overall mine action funding, and five had increase funding, since 2016.
- Of the 10 States Parties with obligations under Article 3 (stockpile destruction):
  - only two had asked for assistance
  - two had deadlines coming up on 1 August but neither had requested assistance.
  - three had 2019 deadlines, but only one had requested and received assistance; one was on track to comply; and one had not submitted Art 7 reports.
  - one had a 2021 deadline, and has requested assistance.
- Of the six States Parties which requested assistance with obligations under Art 4 (clearance and mine risk education), five reported to have received assistance
- 14 of 18 donor states reported to have provided assistance provided assistance towards clearance
- Of the eleven States Parties which reported having obligations under Art 5 (victim assistance):
  - five States Parties requested assistance
  - two States Parties reported receiving assistance
- The ISU and Coordinator on Transparency and Reporting were working constantly to try to increase the rate of reporting, both through reminders on the CCM website and working directly with States bilaterally or remotely

### **3. Discussion of key points raised in informal meetings held on 24 November and 20 December 2017**

- The Coordinators reminded participants of the key points raised in informal meetings on 24 November and 20 December 2017:
  - At the 24 November meeting of States with possible assistance needs, States had said:
    - States requiring assistance should be more assertive in pursuing assistance at an early stage.
    - Affected states should be more active in pursuing regional cooperation as a mechanism to meet CCM obligations.
    - States requiring assistance should have a detailed completion plan in place and provide specific details in assistance requests regarding the nature of assistance required and the extent of existing national investment in completion efforts
    - States requiring assistance need to keep sensitising donors/partners to their needs to combat loss of institutional memory.
    - The ISU or the International Cooperation and Assistance Co- Coordinators could establish a database facilitating not only the sharing of information on donor/partner priorities and capacities to assist, but also the sharing of needs and experience between affected states.

- Donors/partners should coordinate closely with national mine action authorities to understand the real needs and priorities for assistance. Donor states should remain sensitive to each affected States' needs. They should not apply a cookie cutter approach.
    - Donors/partners should consider long-term/multi-year partnerships with States requiring assistance
    - The Country Coalition approach offers an effective framework for ensuring national ownership and long-term commitments by donors/partners.
    - Article 7 reports are a key channel for communication: affected States and others with pressing obligations should use these reports to provide full details of needs, and donor/partner states should use them to provide full details of assistance capacities and priorities.
  - At the 30 December meeting of States with possible capacity to assist those with needs, States had said:
    - In decision-making and reporting on assistance, donors tended to focus more on the socio-economic benefit of mine action than on the specific munition being cleared.
    - Affected countries should highlight potential development benefits of assistance being sought.
    - Donors faced internal challenges coordinating, and breaking down silos between ministries, as well as highlighting the broader development benefits of mine action.
    - Donors faced ongoing coordination challenges both at the international level and on the ground, with other donors and local authorities.
    - It was important for donors to identify the right local authorities to partner with when providing assistance.
    - Multi-year funding arrangements were not possible for some countries, but could be replicated through consistent funding to particular projects.
    - There were a number of countries with impending deadlines under the Convention, which had small obstacles to overcome to achieve completion of their obligations and which could be targeted for assistance.
    - Work was ongoing on the possible establishment of two Country Coalitions.
    - A database could be a useful mechanism for sharing information on needs, capacities for assistance and experience in meeting challenges, and could also help track assistance provided and progress on deadlines.
    - Affected countries had an important role to play in sharing experiences of meeting completion challenges.
- A participating State said:
  - The proposal to establish a database for sharing information between States on cooperation and assistance should be approached with caution – it had been tried under other conventions and failed because of the amount of work required by States and Secretariats to maintain them.

- Partnerships for cooperation and assistance were more effectively built through direct bilateral engagement between States.
- Article 7 reporting was the fundamental transparency mechanism and more needed to be done to enhance reporting and the way reported information was used.
- A participating State said:
  - The issue of cooperation and assistance databases had also been considered under the APMBC, and it had been decided that Article 7 transparency reporting was the best mechanism for ensuring access to information.
  - One alternative was to enable Article 7 transparency reporting to be done online, which could increase transparency and data analysis.
  - The APMBC Cooperation and Assistance Committee was also working on ways to enhance “country page” information available online under the APMBC.
- A participating State said:
  - It had under 1 square kilometre of contaminated territory, which it expected would be cleared this year.
  - Its cluster munitions clearance program was funded from national budget, relying heavily on EU funds.
  - Its deadline for completion of its stockpile destruction obligations was 1 August 2018 and it expected to meet this deadline.
  - It had made mistakes, including by not requesting assistance early.
  - Political will was essential. Sometimes political priorities could change, leading to less focus on completion of CCM obligations.
  - Regional cooperation was very important and was a channel that could be leveraged more.
- The Coordinators queried whether online reporting was an option for the CCM.
- The ISU said:
  - Online reporting should be approached with caution in the CCM context as there were already significant challenges ensuring adequate reporting under existing modalities, and a new form of reporting might cause confusion.
  - The ISU worked intensively on encouraging States to report and analysing transparency reports, and fed its analysis to the thematic coordinators
  - The focus was to bring the rate of initial transparency reporting as close as possible to 100 per cent, to give the clearest possible picture of implementation of the CCM.
- The Coordinators queried how regional cooperation could enhance cooperation and assistance
- A participating State said:
  - Regional cooperation could support cooperation and assistance by ensuring broader input and pooled resources on challenges.

#### **4. Discussion of progress and next steps in operationalising Country Coalitions**

- The Coordinators recalled that the German Presidency of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties of the CCM had proposed Country Coalitions as a specific partnership mechanism and that the Coordinators had undertaken to facilitate the establishment of new Country Coalitions.
  - The Coordinators welcomed representatives of Lebanon and Botswana who had agreed to make presentations to the meeting on recent initiatives they had pursued, which could be thought of as forms of Country Coalitions.
  
- Lebanon said that:
  - Following its participation in a workshop on the Country Coalition concept in 2017, as a key affected state party to the CCM, it was identified as a natural prototype for a Country Coalition
  - Lebanon had established a “Mine Action Forum” an example of what a Country Coalition could look like.
  - The Forum was facilitated by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and the Lebanon Mine Action Centre, with UNDP as the secretariat, and brought together a range of States, international organisations, regional mine action centres and operators.
  - The Forum covered both cluster munitions and landmines, and addressed survey and clearance, best practices, new projects, priorities and needs.
  - Action points from the Forum included: operational efficiency, release of new national mine action strategy, addressing funding and data gaps.
  - Lebanon had made considerable progress against these action points: it had released a new national mine action strategy in February 2018 and was updating its information management system for mine action (IMSMA).
  - Another Forum meeting was planned for September 2018.
  
- Botswana said that:
  - It had entered a partnership with Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA) to address stockpile destruction in October 2017, following a formal request from Botswana in May 2017 and approval from NPA in September 2017.
  - The partnership was based on two principles: shared responsibility for the project (Botswana would provide logistical support and personnel, NPA would contribute technical expertise and cover associated costs).
  - There were four major phases to the project:
    - A verification and feasibility study
    - Research and development
    - Training and capacity building, and destruction of the stockpile
    - Reporting and closure of the project
  - The first two phases had been concluded successfully.
  - The initial phase of the project, conducted in October 2017, gathered the information necessary for decision-making on the level of assistance required, and established that there was full political support for the project.
  - The second phase, conducted in May 2018, involved analysis of possible methods for destruction consistent with environmental law and the trial disassembly and disposal of two bombs.
  - Although there were some technical challenges with particular munitions types which made progress slow, Botswana was working well toward completion, which was possible before the end of 2018, ahead of its June 2019 deadline.

- A participating State said:
  - It was pleased that Country Coalitions concept, which it launched during the German Presidency of the CCM, was gaining traction.
  - The practical results from the partnerships highlighted in Lebanon and Botswana's presentations helped give impetus to the process of forming new Country Coalitions.
  - It was encouraging to see not only States, but also non-State organisations such as NPA and GICHD, involved as partners in the Country Coalitions process.
  - The idea of country-focused cooperation promoted by the concept was now being implemented in a more systematic and comprehensive manner; what was needed now was more partners to support more coalitions, and more positive examples.
  
- Chad said that:
  - It also wanted to take the opportunity to outline its needs under the CCM.
  - Chad never produced or stockpiled cluster munitions, but continued to face contamination challenges dating back to Libyan occupation from 1973-1985.
  - Despite previous clearance done by the French army from 1984-86 in northern Chad, Mines Advisory group (MAG) had discovered two cluster munitions remnants in 2015-16 which showed there was some continuing contamination.
  - As the munitions were air-dropped and the area of contamination was unclear.
  - There had been mine accidents but it was unclear whether these were caused by landmines and cluster munitions as the local population did not know the difference.
  - Chad had personnel trained in technical and non-technical survey. It requested financial and technical support to deploy survey teams to define the contaminated areas.
  - This was the second time Chad had requested this support – it had also done so previously at a regional CCM meeting in Addis Ababa.
  
- The Coordinators thanked Lebanon, Botswana and Chad for their presentations and took particular note of Chad's renewed request for assistance.
  
- A participating State said:
  - The Country Coalition concept had been very useful for its decision making.
  - It was a helpful way of framing the extent of contamination in a particular country, enabling consideration alongside its development needs.
  - It would be interesting to consider how the Country Coalition concept could be used as an example of how regional cooperation can work.
  
- A participating State said:
  - There were some States who were parties to both the APMBC and CCM but it was not clear how integrated their plans were for addressing challenges under each convention – there might be merit in looking how closely these were tied.
  
- The Coordinators invited participating States to comment on how best to progress the Country Coalitions concept, including whether it could be useful to hold a specific Country Coalitions-focused event in the margins of a future MSP.

- A participating State said:
  - After the 2017 workshop on the Country Coalition concept for South East Europe, there had not been much progress on Country Coalitions in that region.
  - A Country Coalitions-focused event in the margins of a future MSP, focusing on a successful partnership such as the Lebanon Mine Action Forum, might help give momentum to discussions in other regions.
  
- A participating State said:
  - It was important to remember that Country Coalitions could take place on different levels and take different forms – sometimes ad hoc partnerships might be the best way for tackling a particular completion challenge.
  
- A participating State said:
  - It was a good idea to have a focused event to take stock of what had been achieved through the Country Coalitions concept, and to give a particular State Party a platform to present their ideas on how they wanted to proceed with addressing their specific completion challenge.

## **5. Concluding remarks:**

- The Coordinators closed the meeting, again thanking Lebanon, Botswana and Chad for their presentations and sharing their experiences.
  - It had been encouraging hearing of the progress being made by Lebanon and Botswana, but important also to hear of Chad's challenges and needs.
  - The Coordinators stood ready to facilitate cooperation to meet those needs.
  
- The Coordinators undertook to produce a summary of the meeting for circulation and posting on the CCM website, and to look into an MSP event which would provide a platform for existing County Coalitions.