

Informal meeting on Enhancing International Cooperation and Assistance under the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)

13:00-15:00, Wednesday 8 February, Room XXVII, Palais de Nations

MEETING SUMMARY

On Wednesday 8 February 2017, Australia and Iraq, CCM Coordinators on International Cooperation and Assistance, hosted an informal meeting in the margins of the 20th International Meeting of National Mine Action Programme Directors and United Nations Advisers (NDM-UN).

Approximately 26 representatives from affected States and donor States participated in the meeting and shared with each other their perspectives on challenges and needs for cooperation and assistance in complying with obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM).

1. KEY POINTS RAISED

1.1 To guide discussions at the meeting, affected States were asked to consider the following questions:

- What is the key obstacle which might prevent your country meeting its clearance and/or stockpile destruction deadlines?
- What is the key obstacle hindering your country's ability to address the needs of victims?
- In what specific ways do you envisage countries with the capacity to do so might assist you to overcome these obstacles?
- What are some of the obstacles your country faces when communicating your needs to countries which may have the capacity to assist your country, and how would you suggest these obstacles be addressed?
- How can States parties make use of available channels of information within the CCM to make their needs more clearly known?

The following are some of the key points raised by affected states in response to these questions.

a) Obstacles to meeting deadlines included:

- Lack of funding
- Lack of long term donor-engagement strategies
- Lack of technical expertise and resources, including technology and equipment
- Scale of contamination
- Lack of appropriate surveys
- Geographical, environmental and community constraints
- Ongoing conflict
- Slow progress on legislation
- Internal procedures and administrative bottlenecks
- Lack of prioritisation and absence of national will
- Competing national priorities
- Obstacles to addressing victims needs included:
 - Lack of funding

- Survivors isolated in remote areas
- Large numbers of unrecorded victims
- Lack of materials for prosthetics

b) Ways in which donor countries might assist affected states included:

- Provision of funding
- Building the capacity of local NGOs and national authorities
- Engaging with local mine action authorities and not working only through international NGOs
- Informing national authorities of aid being delivered and its beneficiaries
- Establishing a high-level donor committee to coordinate provision of assistance and track funding

c) Recommendations on communication challenges included that:

- It was important for affected states to use all available channels, whether formal or informal, and not rely solely on bilateral channels for funding.
- There was good potential in the individualised approach and using a coalition of donors to concentrate on one problem faced by an affected state.

1.2 Donor states were asked to consider the following questions:

- What challenges does your country consider to be the priority issues to address through international cooperation and assistance?
- How should countries facing these challenges communicate with your country to secure access to possible funding or technical assistance your country may provide to address these issues?
- What are some of the obstacles your country faces when providing international cooperation and assistance to affected countries, and how would you suggest these obstacles be addressed?
- How can States parties make use of available channels of information within the CCM to make their needs more clearly known?

The following are some of the key points raised by donor states in response to these questions.

a) Priority issues to be addressed included:

- Failure of affected states to meet Convention deadlines
- Improvement of national coordination mechanisms
- The sustainability of victim assistance
- Building sustainable national capacity and ownership of challenges

b) Recommended channels of communication included:

- Affected states requiring assistance could best communicate their needs to donor states through: donor state embassies or missions in country or in Geneva; partner NGOs; or in meetings in the margins of multilateral conferences
- Article 7 transparency reports

c) Obstacles to providing assistance included:

- Limitations on the provision of assistance to approved NGOs or international organisations
- Lack of communication and coordination between national agencies involved in the provision of assistance

d) Observations on enhancing communication included:

- Affected states should provide as much detail as possible on needs and proposed strategies for meeting them when requesting assistance
- Closer coordination was required between donors and NGOs
- There was potential utility in the individualised approach, country coalitions and country specific workshops to bring relevant stakeholders together to target problems and accelerate progress.
- There should be greater collaboration and coordination of effort between the CCM and MBC

2. DETAILED RECORD OF THE MEETING

2.1 Introductory remarks:

a) Australia and Iraq, CCM Coordinators on International Cooperation and Assistance, explained that the basic purpose of this meeting was to facilitate communication and sharing of information on good practices between affected states and states in a position to provide assistance (donor states). There were a number of affected states with needs and challenges, particularly states who were facing imminent deadlines for the destruction of stockpiles under Art III, clearance under Art IV, and facing difficulties in meeting VA obligations under Art V. In some cases these challenges and needs have not been communicated to others. The key objectives for the meeting were:

- to provide a new, additional channel through which unmet needs and challenges could be directly raised by affected states with donor states;
- to help affected states understand how they could access assistance more effectively by hearing directly from donor states about their priorities and procedures for provision of assistance, and similarly help donor states understand what difficulties affected states face in accessing assistance; and
- to provide the foundations for the establishment of enhanced partnerships between affected and donor states which will facilitate timely and effective implementation of treaty obligations.

- b) Director of the CCM Implementation Support Unit (ISU), Ms. Sheila Mweemba, provided the following overview of relevant information provided in 2015 Annual Transparency Reports:

Article 6 - International Cooperation and Assistance

- 10 States parties requested assistance in their 2015 Annual Report, 14 reported to have provided assistance to affected States though only 4 reported to have received assistance:
- 11 States parties also reported allocating national resources to implement the CCM. However, most neither specified precise amounts nor to which thematic areas the funds were allocated:
- Of the 14 States that provided assistance, most reported on general mine action funding without specific reference to CCM implementation (making it difficult to have a clear picture of assistance dedicated towards CCM implementation):
- No donor State reported to have provided assistance in direct response to a request formulated in Art. 7 Reporting.

Article 3 - Stockpile Destruction

- 9 States parties remain with obligations under Article 3 (counting only States that have officially reported to have SD obligations);
- 2 States Parties have deadlines coming up in 2018 - first Convention deadlines. Neither has requested assistance. It is unclear whether the 3 with deadlines in 2019 are on track as the 2016 Art. 7 Reports have not yet been submitted.

Article 4 - Clearance

- 10 States parties currently remain with obligations under Article 4;
- 9 States parties requested assistance in their 2015 Annual Report;
- 4 States reported to have received assistance;
- 14 States reported to have provided clearance assistance to affected States.

Article 5 - Victim Assistance

- Of the 11 States parties that reported having obligations under Article 5, 6 States requested for assistance in implementing their obligations;
- 1 reported to have received assistance;
- 10 reported to have provided Art. 5 implementation assistance to affected States.

2.2 Interventions by States:

a) An affected State noted:

- In its case completion of stockpile destruction was not so much an issue of financing or capacity, but more of internal procedures and the handling of priorities: It had a number of stockpiles of excess ammunition and weapons; the destruction of its cluster munitions stockpile was just one of the issues that needed to be dealt with.
- It was important for affected states to use all available channels, whether formal or informal, and not rely solely on bilateral channels for funding.

b) A donor State noted:

- Its focus on a *No new victims* approach, and doing as much as possible with the available funds i.e most effective use of resources
- It was working with Mine Action authorities, civil society and operators.
- Dialogue between demining NGOs and governments was critical.
- To access its assistance, affected states should approach its embassies in country directly, as well as making contact in the margins of meetings such as the NDM-UN.
- Achieving a cluster munitions free world would require national ownership and coordination.
- Political will to make demining a priority was critical.
- National ownership and coordination were key prerequisites for funding.
- The usefulness of consultations between affected and donor states at CCM meetings of states parties, facilitated by the relevant coordinators and the ISU.
- It recommended country specific workshops to bring relevant stakeholders together to target problems and accelerate progress.

c) An affected State noted:

- There were many priorities at the political level and demining was sometimes not a national priority - national will was essential for completion.
- The importance of raising awareness and advocating on the issue of mines/cluster munitions at national level.
- The importance of finding ways to link mine action to other thematic issues in order to raise funds and awareness at the national level.
- The importance of integrating mine action priorities in national development strategies.
- The importance of facilitating processes to access funding (e.g. from the EU)
- There was good potential in the idea of using a coalition of donors to concentrate on one problem.
- Securing funding to support implementation was a key challenge as funding often went to the same affected states.
- Complex procedures to access donor funding were a major challenge.

d) A donor State noted:

- Mine action was integrated in its international development and cooperation program, with a focus on capacity-building including the provision of equipment and training – the goal was to create the conditions for sustainability for the long term.
- There were a variety of ways in which a country in need of assistance could reach out to it, including engaging with its Permanent Mission in Geneva during official meetings or local diplomatic offices, making contact with the its Agency for Development Cooperation through its country offices and approaching the civil society partners that it worked through
- Obstacles when providing assistance included the provision in its national law that prevented partnering with or funding military authorities in beneficiary countries.
- Bilateral meetings with its Permanent Mission or delegations in the margins of official meetings of conventions were the best way for affected states to approach it.

e) An affected State noted:

- It faced particular challenges ensuring the prioritisation of the completion of its obligations under the CCM.
- It faced a number of challenges, including:
 - a lack of technical expertise on the destruction process;
 - identifying an appropriate location for destruction;
 - how to mitigate the environmental and community impacts of destruction.
- It required expert assistance on the destruction process.
- It welcomed further bilateral engagement on these issues with those states in a position to assist.

f) A donor state noted:

- Its two main priorities were mine clearance and an integrated approach to victim assistance.
- A key obstacle for affected states in accessing its funding was that funding could only be provided through NGOs or international organisations with which it was already working.
- Affected states should reach out directly to embassies and missions abroad to access its funds

g) An affected State noted:

- Funding was a critical problem; it had insufficient budget to carry out technical surveys, non-technical surveys and clearance.
- Its particular challenges included the fact that its remaining contaminated land was contaminated with both landmines and cluster munitions.

h) A donor State noted:

- Its focus on empowering local authorities to deal with problems in their territory, anchoring mine action and linking mine action with development.
- Affected states could communicate their needs to it bilaterally or through its development agencies.
- Affected states needed to ensure that they provided as much detailed information as possible about the issue on which they required assistance.
- It welcomed requests for assistance that were realistic, achievable and had milestones and other useful information which would give it confidence regarding the potential for the project.
- Affected states should also provide as much detail as possible in their Article 7 reports.
- Many of the obstacles it faced were related to coordination because of the numerous agencies within its Government that were involved in mine action; different organisational units (such as its development agency and armed forces) had different priorities and different ways of approaching mine action.
- Meetings between donor and affected states on the margins of meetings in Geneva were useful.
- There was a real need for an individualised approach to addressing states' challenges.
- The importance of coordination of efforts between the CCM and MBC.

- It was often difficult for donors to determine whether funding for cross-cutting activities such as victim assistance, survey and clearance was being spent on work under the CCM or MBC.

i) An affected State noted:

- It would be impossible to meet its convention deadline because of the extent of contamination, difficult geography, and lack of resources, including tools and appropriate technology.
- It was difficult to predict the timeline for completion given scope of the problem.
- Key obstacles hindering its ability to address the needs of victims included that: many survivors lived in rural and remote areas; the lack of domestic resources to meet the needs of victims; and the unpredictability of UXO accidents.
- It required more resources to comply fully with CCM, in particular technical knowledge and funding for its clearance teams.
- It was difficult to communicate the extent of its needs
- It was also difficult to demonstrate the impact of clearance work, particularly as contaminated land was often already being used as agricultural land, so clearance did not have a marked impact on productivity.
- The importance of ensuring line ministries communicate effectively and systems are in place to ensure information is transferred across the whole of government.
- The importance of using emerging technology to support streamlined and effective methods to monitor needs of victims and survivors.
- Donor countries should adopt a long term vision of support for implementation in countries with such extensive contamination.

j) A donor State noted:

- Affected states should engage with its diplomatic posts in country and concretely explain where mine action factors in any priorities for bilateral assistance (where applicable). They can also engage with its representatives in the margins of multilateral meetings, regarding accessing assistance, and also on planning and priorities.
- Affected states should be clear in identifying their specific needs and challenges, including current levels of skills and capabilities, what was required in terms of equipment and training, the level at which this needed to be sustained and relevant timelines, and any security concerns for those doing capacity building in their country.
- The potential for states that are party to the AMPBC and CCM to integrate and streamline the use of tools in those Conventions which support a voluntary individualised or tailored approach, and the value of informal collaboration between the APMBBC and CCM in supporting such work and avoiding duplication.

k) An affected State noted:

- Building the capacity of local NGOs was of high importance in meeting national challenges.
- The key challenge was securing long-term funding, when donors had other priorities.
- There was a need for better coordination among donors and with affected countries.
- It encouraged establishing a high-level donor committee to discuss the needs of, and track and coordinate funding to all affected countries based on previous assessment and their commitment under the CCM.

- Countries achievements in building their own domestic capacities also needed to be recognised, and funding tracked.
- Donors have to increase dealing directly with national mine action authorities.
- Victims were the most expensive and long term challenge for affected countries; victim assistance should continue to be coordinated by the national mine action centre.
- Donors should use their funds to build the capacity of local NGOs, partner with local NGOs to build local capacity, and encourage international NGOs to build partnerships with local NGOs.

l) An affected State noted:

- It had no stockpiles but faced some challenges in clearance, including the discovery of new contaminated areas that had not been identified previously; ongoing conflict resulting in new ERW and changes to demining workplans and priorities; and limitations on international funding for contaminated areas and newly liberated areas.
- Challenges in the area of victim assistance, including the large number of unrecorded victims due to ongoing increases in their numbers; the national financial crisis; the shortage of raw materials for prosthetics production; the lack of organisations working on victim assistance and the limited funding available for those in the field; and changes in the priorities of the Ministry of Health to focus on conflict areas
- Its needs included: greater funding for international organisations; better exchange of technical information with donor states; and enhancement of the knowledge and expertise of its national authorities.
- It requested donors to coordinate and consult with national authorities regarding aid coming into its territory, and its beneficiaries.

2.3 Concluding remarks:

Australia and Iraq said that as Coordinators they would produce a summary of the meeting, circulate it to all participants, seek feedback on how useful the meeting had been and how it could be improved. A further meeting in the margins of MBC inter-sessional meetings in June was possible.