

Accra regional meeting on the Convention on Cluster Munitions

International Cooperation and Assistance

Introduction by Norway

Thank you

The Convention on Cluster Munitions is the result of a partnership between a number of actors; States that have used, produced or stockpiled cluster munitions, States that never have had or used them, states affected by cluster munitions, the United Nations, the ICRC and not least, civil society, in particular the Cluster Munition Coalition - the CMC.

The Convention is more than a traditional disarmament treaty banning a category of weapons. It is also a framework for targeted actions to address the problems caused by cluster munitions that reflects the partnership that made it happen.

Article 6 of the Convention, on international cooperation and assistance, is the formal and practical expression of this partnership. In many ways, Article 6 is the implementation article of the Convention that should ensure that States Parties are able to fulfil their obligations regarding stockpile destruction, clearance and victim assistance. For while there is no doubt that the primary responsibility for fulfilling the operative articles of the Convention rests with each individual State Party, Article 6 is there to ensure that no state should have to shoulder this burden alone.

In 2010 States Parties, supported by the broader implementation community, adopted the five-year Vientiane Action Plan at the First Meeting of States Parties in Laos. That plan describes a series of steps that states, United Nations and NGOs should take to facilitate adequate and efficient international cooperation and assistance. For international assistance and cooperation to be effective it is crucial that plans with timelines and budgets are developed and communicated in line with the steps outlined in the Vientiane Action Plan.

The provisions in Article 6 and the relevant actions in the Vientiane Action Plan go well beyond traditional donor/recipient relationship. First of all Article 6 establishes that each State Party to the Convention has the right to seek and receive assistance. Then it continues to describe that every State Party in a position to do so shall provide technical, material and financial assistance to affected States Parties, in support of implementation. There is broad agreement among States Parties and within the broader implementation community that in fact all states are in a position to provide some sort of relevant assistance – as Article 6 concerns much more than merely fiscal transfers. The Vientiane Action Plan also highlights regional cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation, in sharing experience, good practices, resources, technology and expertise to ensure the Convention's implementation. So while Article 6 defines clear responsibilities for traditional donors, such as Norway, it goes on to describe the many complementary means of providing assistance to a state affected by cluster munitions.

African states, civil society and humanitarian actors have a wealth of experience from nearly two decades of mine action that is relevant to the implementation of the CCM. Because of this, many African states are in a position to provide relevant assistance to states affected by cluster munitions, either as being contaminated, as having the responsibility for cluster munition victims or because of stockpiles awaiting destruction. We still know too little about the actual structure and magnitude of the cluster munition problems faced by African states. However, we have all reason to assume that the problems caused by cluster munitions on the African continent are much less severe than the landmine problem was when the Mine Ban Convention entered into force in 1999.

We do know that some states with comprehensive landmine clearance programs, and with many landmine victims, are also contaminated by cluster munitions, and have responsibility for the welfare of cluster munition victims. In these instances, cooperation and assistance is probably most effectively channelled via existing actors and operators, such as national mine action centres and humanitarian organisations on the ground. In some states, the full implementation of article 5 in

the Mine Ban Convention will probably also result in subsequent fulfilment of Article 4 in the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Similarly, the work to provide assistance to landmine victims will in most instances go a long way in implementing Article 5 of the CCM on victim assistance.

Norway has for some time supported various forms of actions to implement the CCM in different African states, via the UN, national authorities and NGOs on the ground. We will of course continue to do so, and we will continue to encourage other States Parties to do their part in implementing Article 6 of the CCM.

Allow me to end this introduction with some observations on the relationship between Article 6 and the operative obligations in the Convention. Stockpile destruction, clearance of cluster munition remnants and victim assistance represent challenges that are very different from each other, and that are quite difficult to discuss together in a meaningful manner, except at a very general level.

Both clearance and stockpile destruction are essentially finite tasks with clearly defined endpoints, and with timelines that do not stretch longer than up to a decade, with a few very significant exceptions. Victim assistance constitutes an altogether different challenge and the timelines are the full lifespans of the victims. Implementation of victim assistance also involves different national and international actors, different budgetary frameworks and other policy arenas than those designed to support stockpile destruction and clearance.

In the implementation of Article 6 we need to recognise the very different features of these areas, and take steps to ensure that our continued discussions on international cooperation and assistance reflect these differences.

As I said, Norway will continue to provide substantial support for actions to implement the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Key criteria for our priorities include concrete and updated plans with timelines that reflect actual needs on the ground, realistic budgets, national ownership and a willingness to apply the most relevant, efficient and effective methods. (Thank you).

Intervention by H.E. Tom Tyrihjel, Ambassador of Norway to Ghana, on 29 May 2012