

**Fifth Conference of the High Contracting Parties  
to Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War to  
the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions  
on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons  
Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively  
Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects**

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**Geneva, 9–10 November 2011**  
Item 13 of the provisional agenda  
**Report(s) of any subsidiary organ(s)**

**Report on Clearance, Removal or Destruction of Explosive  
Remnants of War and the Article 4 Generic Electronic  
Template**

**Submitted by the Coordinator<sup>1</sup> on Clearance, removal or destruction of  
Explosive Remnants of War and the Article 4 Generic Electronic  
Template**

**A. Introduction**

1. Pursuant to the decisions of the Fourth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to CCW Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War (CCW/P.V/CONF/2010/11), the Meeting of Experts was mandated:

- (a) To continue the consideration of clearance, removal or destruction of ERW in the context of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V;
- (b) Taking into account the close linkage between effective clearance and the obligations under Article 4 on recording and retaining of information, to merge these two topics under the overall responsibility of the Coordinator on Clearance;
- (c) To consider possible improvements to the generic electronic template aimed at making recording of information on used explosive ordnances more accurate;
- (d) To keep under further consideration the topic on priority-setting for clearance and on review of clearance activities plan implementation; and
- (e) To keep under review the potential environmental consequences of ERW clearance.

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the relevant decision of the Fourth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War, as contained in paragraph 44 (a) of its Final Document (CCW/P.V/CONF/2010/11), the discussion on clearance, removal or destruction of ERW, pursuant to article 3 of the Protocol, was coordinated by Ms. Petra Drexler of Germany.

2. In preparing for the 2011 Meeting of Experts, all High Contracting Parties and observers were encouraged to contribute to the discussions as follows:

- ERW-affected States to provide updates on their clearance programmes, to provide information on their national structures and procedures in defining ERW clearance, including quality management, and to share experience on environmental management policies in ERW clearance practices;
- All High Contracting Parties to provide information on the action they had taken to establish national systems, regulations and procedures for implementing Article 4, and to share their views on the adequacy.

## **B. Exchange of information on clearance and destruction activities**

3. The Meeting of Experts commenced with an exchange of information on clearance and destruction activities. Belarus, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Serbia and Ukraine provided updates on their respective clearance programmes.

## **C. Priority setting in clearance programmes**

4. The session on priority setting commenced with a presentation by Ms. Vera Bohle and Ms. Asa Gilbert from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) on 'Quality management for priority setting in ERW Clearance Programmes'. It was emphasized that prioritization assisted in (i) ensuring that the most important tasks are addressed first, and (ii) achieving the best value for money within a clearance programme. The main challenges in making this determination were the quality of the data on the benefits to be achieved and the differing opinions on how to value different types of benefits. The standard criteria for evaluating ERW programmes included technical feasibility and safety; costs; risks to lives and limbs; economic benefits, which included potential benefits from safe use of land and assets; livelihoods; and progress being made towards international norms and obligations.

5. In terms of national priority setting, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and industrialized countries do not leave this task to technical experts; they only provide technical input. However, many ERW affected countries are fragile and conflict-affected States or low income countries, and they require assistance for the short- to medium-term. This often means technical experts or donors set the priorities. If the ERW problem cannot be solved in the short- to medium-term, States need to establish a national system for determining their priorities. This requires both 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches. The top-down components include allocation of resources and policies. The bottom-up approach ensures that local knowledge and community values are taken into account. Different components of mine action prioritize different elements. For example, the humanitarian component places heavy weight on the risk to people's lives and limbs, whereas the internal security component prioritizes removing constraints to force mobility.

6. Quality management begins with the accreditation of an organization to assess whether an operator could safely and efficiently clear ERW. This process takes place prior to deployment in the field and involves, for example, testing of equipment, on-site assessments and checking daily reports.

7. The purpose of quality management in mine action is to ensure that operators are acting in accordance with the agreed procedures, land released is safe for use by the community, safety of staff, and that all decisions and operations are transparent. To achieve

these goals it is necessary to implement 'quality assurance' measures (assessing the process) and 'quality control' measures (checking the product). Post-clearance assessments provide feedback on the quality of the operation, including socio-economic aspects. This data should support better priority setting.

8. Participants of the Meeting were invited to contribute to the discussion through providing information on their national structures and procedures in defining priorities for ERW clearance, including quality management. Belarus and Russian Federation provided information regarding priority setting and quality management in their respective clearance programmes.

## **D. The potential environmental impact of ERW clearance and destruction programmes**

9. Referring to the International Mine Action Standards 10.70 on 'Safety and Occupational Health: Protection of the Environment', the Coordinator reminded the meeting that national authorities and operators have a responsibility to ensure that the clearance, removal and destruction of ERW was carried out in a manner that minimized any negative impacts on the environment. National authorities were urged to ensure that their environmental management policies were taken into account when formulating national mine action standards and policies. From the national reports submitted in 2011, only a few High Contracting Parties made specific reference to environmental management policies. Such policies might be in place, it could simply be the case that High Contracting Parties have not reported as there was no specific requirement to provide this information in the reporting form.

10. No delegation took the floor under this agenda item.

## **E. Article 4 generic electronic template**

11. In introducing the discussion on Article 4, the Coordinator presented an assessment of the information submitted by High Contracting Parties in Form B of the 2011 national reports. Two-thirds of those reporting provided information on steps to implement Article 4 and only a few of these States referred to the generic electronic template. About one third of those providing information on their national implementation procedures of Article 4 stated to do so on a voluntary basis. Some High Contracting Parties which did not provide information stated that they were not ERW-affected States. Finally, one High Contracting Party stated that it did not require Article 4 regulations as it never produced, stockpiled or used explosive ordnance.

12. Following the introduction, Ireland made a presentation on its recording procedures pursuant to Article 4. As a State with both small armed forces and inventories of munitions and delivery systems, Ireland had only limited resources to overcome the challenges of implementing Article 4.

13. In developing and implementing procedures for Article 4, Ireland made two key decisions. Firstly, all junior leaders in combat and combat support units would need to know about the requirement to record the use of all explosive ordnances. Secondly, the recording template would extend beyond the scope of Protocol V to ensure a comprehensive approach and engender a culture of recording throughout its armed forces.

14. Although Ireland has a modest inventory of delivery systems, it nevertheless covered a broad range of systems and associated munitions types. For this reason, it was a

challenge for Ireland to develop a universally applicable recording template to cover a wide variety of delivery systems and munitions types.

15. At the top of Ireland's recording template were basic identifying details such as formation, unit, date and time. The template contained three segments which were: (1) Details of the location of the delivery system allowing for both Geo Positioning System (GPS) and map references data; (2) Characteristics of the intended target as seen from the firing point and the type of explosive ordnance used; and (3) Details of the mean point of impact of the ordnance, the number of rounds delivered and if relevant, the predicted dispersion of the ordnance. There was a 'Remarks' column for recording unexploded ordnance (UXO) or suspected UXO.

16. The electronic form would be e-mailed through the operational chain of command. All records of explosive ordnance use would be forwarded to the Joint Operations Centre, where the operational staff consolidated reports from the field units.

17. Ireland's system went live on 1 January 2011. As Ireland's armed forces gain more experience with the procedures and taking into account future acquisition of weapons systems and ammunition, they expect to amend and further develop the template. The system was operated via secure internal e-mail. It was hoped that the speed and interactivity of the system could be improved without compromising the information's security and the control function within Ireland's headquarters.

18. Following the discussion, a number of delegations provided additional information on their national practices in recording and retaining information. While one delegation suggested to work towards a unified international database, no changes to the generic electronic template were suggested.

## **F. Recommendations**

19. In light of the above, it is recommended that the Fifth Conference of the High Contracting Parties decide as follows:

(a) To continue the consideration of clearance, removal or destruction of ERW in the context of the Meetings of Experts and the Conferences of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V;

(b) To further explore, building on previous discussions of priority-setting and quality management, appropriate practical methods to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in ERW clearance programmes;

(c) To encourage High Contracting Parties to include detailed information in reporting form B on steps taken to implement the provisions of Article 4 and the Technical Annex, including through using the Article 4 generic electronic template, and to continue the consideration of national practices of recording of information on explosive ordnance.

(d) Also, to encourage all countries to contribute to the information sharing on methods of recording and retaining information on the use or abandonment of explosive ordnance.

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