
**Fourth 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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Report on clearance

Submitted by the Coordinator¹ on Clearance, Removal or Destruction of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) under Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V

I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to the relevant decisions of the Third Conference of the High Contracting Parties to CCW Protocol V on ERW, as contained in paragraphs 32 to 36 of its Final Document (CCW/P.V/CONF/2009/9), the 2010 Meeting of Experts was mandated to continue the consideration of clearance, removal or destruction of ERW — a core issue of the implementation of CCW Protocol V.
2. The Third Conference also decided to keep under review the implementation of article 4 and its impact on the implementation of the obligations on clearance, removal or destruction of ERW under article 3 of the Protocol. It also decided to keep under review the potential environmental impact of ERW clearance.
3. Furthermore, the Third Conference reiterated its invitation to all States in need of assistance to bring their case to the attention of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V, as well as to the donor States to identify all possible sources of support for ERW-related activities and to make full use of the Protocol V implementation mechanism as a tool to connect needs with resources and fostering cooperation and assistance.

II. Organization and work of the 2010 Meeting of Experts on clearance, removal or destruction of ERW

4. In accordance with these recommendations and taking into consideration other aspects of Protocol V obligations related to ERW clearance, the Coordinator on Clearance,

¹ In accordance with the relevant decision of the Third Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War, as contained in paragraph 54 (a) of its Final Document (CCW/P.V/CONF/2009/9) the discussion on clearance, removal or destruction of ERW, pursuant to article 3 of the Protocol, was coordinated by Ms. Renata Alisauskiene of Lithuania.

Removal or Destruction of ERW invited all experts to continue the discussions focusing on four main topics:

(a) Clearance, Removal or Destruction of ERW: exchange of national information and experience;

(b) Responsibilities of the user of explosive ordnance: national experience in introducing to the armed forces and making use of article 4 generic electronic template or other appropriate means to record information on the use of explosive ordnance; submission of information to the parties in control of the territory pursuant to article 4 of the Protocol;

(c) Responsibilities of the State party in control of ERW-contaminated territory: particular focus on evaluation and achieving results in clearance projects undertaken by ERW contaminated states;

(d) Environmental impact of ERW.

5. As the item of ERW, clearance is closely interlinked to cooperation and assistance as well as to the implementation of the obligations under Article 4 of the Protocol, the first and the second topics were co-chaired by the Coordinator on Clearance with the Coordinators on Cooperation and Assistance² and on Article 4³, respectively.

6. In preparing for the 2010 Meeting of Experts all States parties and observers were encouraged, as follows:

(a) States in need of assistance to share information on their national practice and their experience in clearance, removal and/or destruction of ERW and to provide updates on their ERW situation;

(b) Parties in control of ERW-contaminated territory to share their national experience in going through ERW clearance project cycle, starting with priority setting and finishing with the evaluation of the results on the clearance done;

(c) All States, observers and interested organizations to provide information on the national procedures and experience in recording, retaining and transfer of information on the use of explosive ordnance in accordance with article 4 of the Protocol;

(d) States parties and observers to discuss the environmental impact of ERW and share their national experience on ERW clearance practices in order to make clearance less harmful to the environment.

7. The following discussion papers were made available: no. 1, titled "Elements for discussion on clearance, removal or destruction of ERW" a food-for-thought paper prepared by the Coordinator; and no. 6, titled "Evaluation of clearance programmes, prepared by GICHD upon the request of the Coordinator".

8. Clearance of ERW represents a considerable financial, technological, material or human resources challenge for the affected States hence a key task for the Meeting of Experts was to provide a forum to match needs with resources. In particular, national updates on clearance activities were made by Belarus, Senegal and Serbia.

9. Building on the 2009 discussion on priority setting for clearance activities, in 2010 the focus was on the evaluation and achieving results in clearance projects. Following an introductory presentation by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian

² Mr. James C. O'Shea of Ireland

³ Mr. Henrik Markuš of Slovakia

Disarmament, the experts were invited to an informal and open exchange of views on national experience in going through the ERW clearance project cycle, starting with priority setting and finishing with the evaluation of the clearance results.

10. The Clearance of exploded ammunition stockpiles was also considered. In particular, the Meeting of Experts benefited from a presentation by the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA).

11. Another key topic of the Meeting of Experts was the implementation of the State parties' responsibilities under article 4 of the Protocol, including the established national practices and culture of recording, retaining and transfer of information on the use of explosive ordnance that could become ERW.

12. The discussion on article 4 of the Protocol benefitted from a number of statements on national practices of recording of information on explosive ordnance, as well as from statements of relevant international organizations on specific recording and retaining of information practices, agreed and applied by those organizations' member states that are parties to CCW Protocol V as well.

13. The presentation by Mr. Daniel Eriksson (GICHD) on possible improvements to the generic electronic template aimed at making recording more accurate was duly noted, with the understanding that further discussions and possible amendments were needed.

14. The fourth topic was focused on the environmental consequences of ERW in relation to clearance and the need to undertake ERW clearance activities in an environmentally-friendly manner in accordance with International Mine Action Standards on the protection of environment. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, the main presentation by Mr. Mario Burger of the Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch of United Nations Environment Programme, was cancelled. Nevertheless, several presentations on national practices making the environmental impact of ERW clearance less harmful demonstrated the need to continue the discussions on this topic.

III. Recommendations

15. In light of the above, it is recommended that the Fourth Conference of the High Contracting Parties takes the following decisions:

(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) 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 ordinances more accurate;

(d) To keep under further consideration the topic on priority-setting for clearance and on review of clearance activities plan implementation;

(e) To keep under review the potential environmental consequences of ERW clearance.