

**Sixth 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  
Cooperation and Assistance and Requests for Assistance**

**Submitted by the Coordinator<sup>1</sup> on Cooperation and Assistance  
and Requests for Assistance**

**Introduction**

1. Cooperation and assistance continued to be addressed as a priority issue for Protocol V. This is in recognition of the reality that cooperation and assistance is essential to achieving the goals of universal adherence to and implementation of Protocol V. This year's discussions included a special focus on the potential for cooperation among those States affected by explosive remnants of war (ERW) and developing States, and cooperation among providers of assistance.
2. High Contracting Parties which had submitted requests for assistance and other countries seeking assistance were encouraged to provide updates on their needs and any progress in securing assistance. High Contracting Parties and international organizations in a position to do so were encouraged to respond to requests for assistance and provide updates on their cooperation and assistance efforts in this area.
3. Given that the Meeting of Experts provides a platform to share information and explore new possibilities for enhancing cooperation and assistance programmes, the Coordinator held a small group meeting with affected countries to discuss their priorities, experiences and challenges in accessing assistance.

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the decision of the Fifth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War, as contained in paragraph 43(c) of its final document (CCW/P.V/CONF/2011/12), the discussions on cooperation and assistance and requests for assistance pursuant to Article 7 were led by Mr. Yevgen Lisuchenko of Ukraine as Coordinator.

## **National reporting on international cooperation and assistance**

4. Drawing on the information presented by the CCW Implementation Support Unit during the session on national reporting, the Coordinator noted that the greatest amount of resources were being given for the clearance of explosive remnants of war (ERW) and the preferred avenue for delivering financing and resources was through organisations or joint operations. The Coordinator supported the call by the Coordinator on National Reporting for all High Contracting Parties to submit national annual reports.

## **Updates on cooperation and assistance**

5. Turning to 'Updates on cooperation and assistance', the Coordinator reminded delegations that the Meeting of Experts was an opportunity for States affected by explosive remnants of war (ERW) to bring their needs to the attention of States or relevant organizations and institutions which may be in a position to provide assistance. Three States had made formal requests for assistance under Article 7 and those were Belarus, Serbia and Ukraine. The Meeting of Experts was also an opportunity for States and organisations which were in a position to provide assistance to share information on the types of assistance they could contribute and updates on their cooperation and assistance efforts under Protocol V.

6. In accordance with the decisions of the Fifth Conference, delegations were encouraged to share their experiences of cooperation between affected and developing countries. The provision of expertise and exchange of information between affected and developing countries was a valuable contribution to cooperation and assistance. A second element of this year's discussion was coordination and cooperation between those providing assistance. The Coordinator posed the following questions - how were donors coordinating their efforts? Were donors assessing what were the priority needs and ensuring that these were addressed?

7. The following affected countries provided updates:

(a) Belarus reported that its formal request for assistance had been for a limited number of mine detectors, radios and global positioning systems (GPS) equipment. Belarus greatly appreciated the Government of India's readiness to provide assistance. Both countries had reached an agreement in principle on this cooperation and Belarus hoped to provide a further update at the Sixth Conference.

(b) Bosnia and Herzegovina engaged in cooperation with other affected countries. For example, it was preparing for a visit by a team from Armenia that wanted to learn about surveillance and implementation of quality control in clearance programmes. In 2011, Bosnia and Herzegovina held a short training session on its procedures in demining for a delegation from Turkey. Bosnia and Herzegovina was also a recipient of such cooperation as the Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) had assisted it with the surveillance of landmines.

(c) Through its own experiences of developing and maintaining mine clearance programmes, Croatia was in a position to export this knowledge and expertise to other affected States. CROMAC was able to provide a range of services from how to establish a national mine action centre through to expertise on testing demining machinery. In terms of its cooperation with other affected States, a Croatian delegation had visited Colombia to provide training on legislation governing mine action, CROMAC was working with a Turkish company on demining of the Turkish – Syrian boarder, and explosive ordnance

training had been provided to candidates from the South East European region. These were a few examples of Croatia's work with other affected countries.

(d) As a new High Contracting Party, Lao People's Democratic Republic wanted to eliminate and minimise the impact of ERW on its civilian population. Lao People's Democratic Republic intended to submit a request for assistance within the framework of Protocol V and, in particular, it needed assistance with the clearance of ERW.

(e) Serbia reported that it had started a new project with Norwegian's People Aid to clear cluster munitions. Also, Serbia expressed its appreciation for the assistance provided by China and the Russian Federation. It required more assistance for clearing those areas that had been contaminated during the conflicts of World War II and the 1990s.

(f) Ukraine expressed its appreciation to the organisations that had assisted it with the surveillance of ERW. Ukraine was going to need far greater resources to clear its vast areas which remained contaminated. Over the past seven years significant progress had been made and this demonstrated that assistance made it possible to save lives.

8. The following donor countries provided updates:

(a) Australia has partnered with a range of States to clear ERW. These included Afghanistan, Cambodia, Georgia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya and Sri Lanka. Australia was preparing to provide assistance to Palau, which was the scene of intense fighting during World War II and where thousands of unexploded bombs remained throughout the country. Australia was increasingly reflecting on physical security and stockpile management in its partner countries.

(b) China appreciated the difficulties faced by affected countries and strongly supported South-South cooperation. Over the past ten years, China provided assistance to 14 States in Africa, which included training of personnel on demining and equipment for the clearance of cluster munitions and landmines.

(c) Germany explained that it did not distinguish between ERW and landmines. In 2011, Germany provided a total of 15.6 million euros for 39 projects within 24 countries. Germany's support to Colombia, People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Viet Nam primarily focused on ERW clearance. In most of its programmes mine risk education was included. For those seeking assistance, Germany's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the focal point.

(d) As a donor to mine action, the Netherlands also did not distinguish between ERW and landmines. It contributed 15 million euros annually to mine action. The Netherlands used two channels for delivering this funding – through its fund for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and through the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). Last year the Netherlands launched a new tender for NGOs which covered a four year period. It believed that multi-annual support through NGOs was an effective way of contributing to security and development. On the issue of coordination between donors, the Netherlands believed that the Mine Action Support Group (MASG) was an important body, but one that essentially focused on the exchange of information. The Netherlands coordinated with other donors on a bilateral basis through the United Nations or in-country through the local mine action centres.

(e) Switzerland developed a new mine action strategy for the period 2012 - 2015. This strategy was similar to past strategies and based on principles such as commitment to international treaties, national ownership by the affected State and a commitment to human rights, respect for diversity and an inclusive approach to mine action. Switzerland contributed 16 million Swiss francs to mine action annually. It supported capacity building and in such projects encouraged South-South cooperation.

(f) The United States of America provided a range of technical and financial assistance to help States with problems concerning ERW. It provided assistance for clearance, including existing ERW at the time of entry into force of Protocol V, destruction of aging and excess munitions and the proper management of stockpiles. Assistance was provided through the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) in the Bureau of Political and Military Affairs of the State Department. The United States contributed over 142 million USA dollars in 2011 and expected to spend over 149 million in 2012. To initiate a bilateral assistance programme, a government should submit a formal and detailed request preferably from a minister or deputy minister to the relevant United States of America embassy. In the case of a catastrophic event or cessation of a conflict, PM/WRA could assess and potentially execute remedial action. For example, most recently in response to the 4 March explosions in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, a PM/WRA team arrived within 48 hours of a request for assistance and within a few days additional experts arrived to clean up unexploded ordnance in populated areas. The United States of America believed that donor coordination was essential to ensuring that donor assistance was delivered to where it was most needed. It supported the MASG which endeavored to coordinate the contributions to mine action of the major donors and increase support where it was needed. Due to donors having different financial years and donating to a range of organisations, it was difficult to obtain a clear picture where funding was going, to align priorities and avoid duplication. Improved coordination may assist in better understanding where there were funding gaps.

(g) Mr. Gustavo Laurie of UNMAS expressed his organisation's appreciation to those donors that contributed to mine action through the United Nations. Mr. Laurie explained that the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG) focused on clearance and also unplanned explosions. It was able to quickly deploy teams to undertake assessments. Affected countries can submit a request for mine action assistance through the highest United Nations official in their country or via a note verbale through their permanent missions in New York to UNMAS. The requests would then be assessed within the IACG.

9. From the discussions, it was clear that those affected countries which had developed their own expertise in mine action were sharing their knowledge and skills with other affected countries. The partnerships between affected countries were an important and growing source of cooperation and assistance. The level of coordination between providers of assistance was unclear. Coordination between providers of assistance was challenging partly due to donor countries and relevant organisations having differing administrative requirements, priorities for cooperation and assistance, and resourcing of their individual development programmes.

10. The Coordinator held a small group meeting with affected countries. In opening the small group meeting, the Coordinator asked countries to speak on their priorities, share their views on where further work was needed in the area of cooperation and assistance, and what challenges had they experienced in accessing assistance. Belarus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Sudan and Ukraine participated in the small group meeting. As a result of the wide ranging discussion and countries specifically identifying where their greatest needs were, the Coordinator undertook to follow up with the MASG and UNMAS on what further assistance could be provided.

## **Recommendations for the Meeting of Experts in 2013**

11. In order to further progress the work on cooperation and assistance, the Sixth Conference of the High Contracting Parties may wish to take the following decisions:

(a) The consideration of cooperation and assistance, and of requests for assistance, to remain as a priority issue in the context of the Meetings of Experts and Conferences of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V.

(b) To continue to utilise the small group meeting with affected States to discuss in detail their priorities and challenges in the area of cooperation and assistance. Also, to invite donor countries to join the small group meeting.

(c) To encourage High Contracting Parties, relevant international organizations and institutions which might be in a position to do so, to consider providing assistance in response to requests submitted under Article 7 of the Protocol, or in response to needs identified in other ways, including during the Meetings of Experts.

(d) To encourage States which have submitted requests for assistance to continue to provide regular updates on the status of those requests.

(e) To encourage all High Contracting Parties which have provided assistance and cooperation to submit information on such efforts in their national annual reports, especially those States engaged in cooperation between affected and developing States.

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