
First Review Conference
Nairobi, 29 November – 3 December 2004
Item 14 of the revised provisional agenda

Draft programme of meetings and related matters to facilitate implementation, 2005-2009

Prepared by Germany, Malaysia and the President-Designate

Conclusions on Principles:

1. Based on discussions held in advance of the First Review Conference, the States Parties conclude that the following principles shall guide their programme of meetings and related matters during the period 2005-2009:
 - (a) Both formal Meetings of the States Parties, as well as informal meetings of the Standing Committees, on a regular basis, and with the full and active participation of States Parties, interested international organizations and of non-governmental organizations, as well as States not parties that share our aims but have not yet joined our common effort, will be indispensable for the future functioning of the Convention and the realisation of its aims,
 - (b) The considerable experience gained in the years since the entering into force of the Convention will be taken into account, including the existing organizational structure and characteristics of meetings with their focus on the Convention's core aims, partnership and cooperation, flexibility and informality, continuity, and effective preparations.
 - (c) The work and structure of the Standing Committees, the Coordination Committee and Implementation Support Unit of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining have been appreciated and will continue to be important elements for the implementation of the Convention,
 - (d) Voluntary regional initiatives, including conferences and workshops, have been appreciated and will continue to help enhance efforts to implement the Convention and assist in preparing States Parties for Meetings of the States Parties and meetings of the Standing Committees,
 - (e) Transparency and the exchange of information will remain crucial to assuring confidence and the proper functioning of the Convention's cooperation mechanisms,

Decisions on Future Meetings:

2. States Parties therefore decide the following:
 - (a) To hold annually, until the Second Review Conference, a Meeting of the States Parties which will regularly take place in the second half of the year, in Geneva or – when possible or appropriate – in a mine-affected country.
 - (b) To convene annually, until 2009, informal intersessional meetings of the Standing Committees—to be held in Geneva in the first half of the year — for a duration of up to five days.
 - (c) As a general rule, however not excluding exceptions for specific reasons, intersessional meetings of the Standing Committees would take place in February/March and the annual Meetings of the States Parties in September.
 - (d) The Second Review Conference will take place in the second half of the year 2009.
 - (e) In keeping with the States Parties' practice of being flexible and pragmatic in addressing changing circumstances, the States Parties may review decisions regarding their 2005 – 2009 programme of meetings at each Meeting of the States Parties prior to the Second Review Conference.
3. With regard to the next meeting of the States Parties, States Parties decide the following:
 - (a) The next Meeting of States Parties will be held in Croatia and take place [November][December]–[November][December]] 2005.
 - (b) Meetings of the Standing Committees will take place during the week of 13-17 June 2005 with the length of individual meetings and their sequencing, and duration of the entire period meetings to be established by the Coordinating Committee.
 - (c) Consistent with the practice of past Meetings of the States Parties, the Coordinating Committee shall be chaired by the President elected by the Review Conference until the States Parties elect a subsequent President. The chair of the Coordinating Committee will continue the practice of keeping the States Parties apprised of the Coordinating Committee's functioning.
 - (d) The following States Parties shall serve as the Standing Committee Co-Chairs and Co-Rapporteurs until the end of the next Meeting of the States Parties:
 - Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies: Algeria and Sweden (Co-Chairs), [...] and [...] (Co-Rapporteurs);
 - Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration: Nicaragua and Norway (Co-Chairs), [...] and [...] (Co-Rapporteurs);
 - Stockpile Destruction: Bangladesh and Canada (Co-Chairs), [...] and [...] (Co-Rapporteurs);

- The General Status and Operation of the Convention: New Zealand and South Africa (Co-Chairs), [...] and [...] (Co-Rapporteurs).

Background:

4. At the First Preparatory Meeting held on 13 February 2004, Germany and Malaysia prepared and submitted a document entitled “Nature, Timing and Sequencing of Post-2004 Meetings of the States Parties and Related Matters” contained in Document APLC/CONF/2004/PM.1/WP.2 dated 26 January 2004 (hereinafter referred to as “the Discussion Paper”) for consideration of the meeting.
5. Views were expressed by many States Parties, international and non-governmental organizations on their preferred options as contained in the annex to the Discussion Paper.
6. In the effort to obtain a clearer and comprehensive picture of the issue and in order to solicit further views on the matter, Germany and Malaysia developed a questionnaire, providing several possible options. The questionnaire was later circulated to the States Parties, international and non-governmental organizations in late April this year. Subsequently, encouraging responses were received from various respondents by the 14 May 2004 deadline.
7. However, both Germany and Malaysia felt that more time and opportunity should be given to interested parties to submit their views. As a result, the questionnaire was redistributed to the States Parties, international and non-governmental organizations and the deadline for submission was extended to 2 June 2004. Subsequently, additional views and comments were received which were very valuable and useful.
8. The findings of the responses received were carefully analyzed and reflected in a document (Document APLC/CONF/2004/PM.2/L.7/Amend.1) dated 28 June 2004, submitted at the Second Preparatory Committee Meeting held from 28-29 June 2004 in Geneva.
9. At the Second Preparatory Meeting, a large number of States Parties, international and non-governmental organizations expressed their views on the four options contained in the questionnaire.
10. Based on the responses received from the questionnaire and also the views expressed during the Second Preparatory Meeting, following are some of the key conclusions:
 - (a) Organizational Structure

In general, a large number of delegations favor retaining the existing organizational structure and nature of meetings.
 - (b) Annual Meetings of States Parties
 - (i) Many delegations had expressed the need to maintain a balance between the formal and informal meetings of the Convention. Meetings of States Parties which are considered as formal meetings should continue to be convened as some decisions

can only be taken at a Meeting of the States Parties or a Review Conference.

(ii) On the other hand, the meetings of the Standing Committees which are essentially regarded as informal meetings continues to provide a very effective mechanism for States Parties, States not Parties, international governmental and non-governmental organizations to exchange views and experiences as proven over the years.

(iii) It is equally important to consider the views of several delegations on the need to overall reduce the number of meetings in a year so that the cost involved in organizing many meetings can be better utilised for other beneficial purposes to promote the implementation of the Convention.

(iv) Since the convening of annual Meetings of the States Parties seems necessary for the reasons mentioned in paragraph 7 (b) (i), possible options would be (A) to hold one set of meetings of the Standing Committees and one Meeting of the States Parties in a year or (B) to convene in a year one set of meetings of the Standing Committees and one meeting combining (I) three days of meetings of the Standing Committees with (II) a two-day abridged Meeting of the States Parties.

(c) Duration of meetings

(i) Holding the Meetings of the States Parties and meetings of the Standing Committees for a period between 3 and 5 days is the period considered adequate and reasonable to many States Parties. Any period shorter or longer than this may not be acceptable to them.

(d) Venue of meetings

(i) There seems to be a wide support for meetings of the Standing Committees to continue be held in Geneva primarily to minimize the cost – in part through the generous offer of the GICHD to continue hosting these meetings – and that there is a likelihood that more countries would participate if these meetings are convened in Geneva.

(ii) For the same reasons, many think that, as a general rule, Meetings of the States Parties should also be held in Geneva. However, a considerable number of countries felt, that holding these Meetings in mine-affected countries would be the preferred option.

11. Views were also expressed on other related matters pertaining to the nature of meetings as follows:

(a) Regional meetings

(i) While many delegations have underscored the usefulness and importance of convening regional meetings, the general preference is that these meetings should not be institutionalized under the framework of the Convention. Instead, regional

meetings could be organized on voluntary basis, as and whenever necessary.

(b) Nature of discussions at meetings of the Convention

(i) It can be concluded that many supported the continuance of thematic discussions as the preferred mode of discussion especially at the meetings of the Standing Committees.

(c) Participation at meetings of the Convention

(i) Many agreed that the informal setting and flexibility of the meetings of the Standing Committees encourages the widest possible participation among States Parties, States not parties, international organizations and non-governmental organizations and civil society.

(d) Coordinating Committee and Implementation Support Unit

(i) The existing structures of the Coordinating Committee and the Implementation Support Unit of the GICHD are equally considered by a clear majority of the answers as being adequate for serving the purposes of the Convention.

(e) Transparency

(i) Many agreed that both Meetings of the States Parties and the informal meetings of the Standing Committees provide sufficient opportunity for States Parties to exchange information pursuant to Article 7 of the Convention.
