



**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL CCM COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Held on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020**

**from 8:30 to 9:45 hours**

**1. Present:**

Switzerland – 2RC President

H.E. Mr. Félix Baumann

Ms. Aline Berdoz

United Kingdom – 10MSP President-Designate

H.E. Mr. Aidan Liddle

Ms. Eleonora Saggese

Afghanistan

Mr. Abdul Ahad Shirzad

Australia

Mr. Diwaka Prakash

Austria

Ms. Susanne Hammer

Ms. Gamze Subasi

Iraq

Mr. Mohammed Ridha Al-Haidari

Chile:

Ms. Pamela Moraga

Montenegro

Mr. Nikola Ražnatović

Netherlands

Mr. Reint Vogelaar

New Zealand

Ms. Charlotte Skerten

Philippines

Mr. Jonelle John Domingo

Spain

Mr. Juan Manglano

Sweden

Ms. Sara Lindegren

Zambia

Mr. Billy Kunda Malijani

CMC

Ms. Kasia Derlicka-Rosenbauer

ICRC

Ms. Wen Zhou

UNODA

Ms. Silvia Mercogliano

Ms. Erika Kawahara

Apologies not received:

Mexico

Namibia

Implementation Support Unit - Secretariat

Ms. Sheila N. Mweemba

Mr. Emad Al-Juhaishi

Ms. Elaine Weiss

## **2. Opening remarks by the President**

Ambassador Félix Baumann, President of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) 2<sup>nd</sup> Review Conference (2RC), warmly welcomed Committee members to the fourth Coordination Committee Meeting under the Swiss Presidency, which was held on the video conferencing platform, Zoom, due to nationwide social distancing measures instituted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The President expressed his hope that everyone including their families were doing well despite the unprecedented times the world was going through. On behalf of Switzerland, Ambassador Baumann conveyed its solidarity with the numerous countries that had lost loved ones to the pandemic. He emphasized that the Swiss Presidency was determined to continue with its duties and firm commitments towards the Convention despite the extraordinary circumstances.

The Meeting proceeded with the provisional agenda which was amended to include an update on activities undertaken by the Presidency and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) since the last meeting.

## **3. Update by the 2RC Presidency on activities undertaken since the last Coordination Committee Meeting, with a focus on CCM universalization**

The President reported that some of the activities planned by the presidency to further CCM universalization had already been undertaken in the first quarter of the year. He informed that together with the ISU Director, he had met with officials of the Zimbabwean Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence in Harare, Zimbabwe from 4 to 5 February 2020. The objective was to continue to promote the CCM and provide clarification on its key provisions including on the available implementation assistance should Zimbabwe accede to the Convention. They were accompanied on the visits by the Ambassador of Switzerland to Zimbabwe and representatives of the Embassies of Germany and the United Kingdom in Harare. It was agreed that the three representations in Harare would continue to engage with the Zimbabwean authorities including through military-to-military dialogue to facilitate progress.

Ambassador Baumann also reported on the side event on CCM universalization that was held on Friday, 14 February 2020 in the margins of the 23<sup>rd</sup> International Meeting of National Mine Action Programme Directors and UN Advisers (NDM-UN 23). He underlined that the side event aimed to provide a platform for CCM Signatory and States not Party to discuss challenges and possible solutions to joining the Convention in the lead up to the 2RC. He informed that the event was attended by 6 States not Party and that the CMC, ICRC and ISU participated as Panelists. The Philippines also shared its ratification experience also as a panelist during the side event.

On 19 February 2020 the President gave a briefing to the African Ambassadors at the African Union (AU) office in Geneva on the Convention and its implementation where he highlighted the Presidency's priorities for the year especially on advancing its universalization on the continent.

The President also highlighted the CARICOM Regional Workshop held in St. George's, Grenada from 3 to 4 March 2020. The workshop was hosted by Grenada and funded by Canada. He expressed appreciation for the support of the ISU and the CMC as expert resources at the workshop. He informed

that his colleague, Aline, had represented the presidency and participated in the workshop along with representatives of Canada.

Ambassador Baumann informed the meeting that the two events originally planned to take place in Africa during the first quarter of the year had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One was the CCM Ratification Workshop in Abuja, Nigeria, scheduled for 26 to 27 March 2020 and the second was the regional workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, organized by the ICRC and the AU that had been scheduled to take place that week. He expressed his hope to convene the Abuja workshop later in June back-to-back with the Addis Ababa workshop although this would also depend on the decision of the organizers of the latter workshop as well as on the evolution of the pandemic. Furthermore, he indicated that the ASEAN workshop would also have to take place later in the year, possibly at the end of August or in early September.

#### **4. Consideration of the zero draft of the CCM 2RC Review document**

Ambassador Baumann expressed his sincere gratitude to all Coordination Committee members that had contributed to the preparation of the Review document. He reported that he and his team in Geneva and Bern had carefully read through each section of the document to review sections as necessary to ensure coherence throughout the document. He pointed out that he attached great importance and utility to this document especially in its identification of implementation challenges in the previous 5 years under review which would be reflected in the Lausanne Action Plan (LAP). He reminded that inclusivity had been the primary objective in producing the document and hence the reason the Committee members had been requested to verify the information in their respective sections of the consolidated document. Thereafter, the President opened the floor for general comments on the draft document and asked that detailed comments be submitted in writing as the meeting would not be a drafting session but just an opportunity to receive general feedback on the draft document.

In response to the President's invitation, Ambassador Liddle, speaking on behalf of the United Kingdom, thanked Switzerland for all that it was doing not only for the Convention but also for the international community in Geneva to keep it safe and updated on the COVID-19 pandemic. He also expressed his solidarity to all those who were going through the COVID-19 situation in Switzerland. The United Kingdom pointed out that the document was excellent in its ability to present a factual summary of the achievements of the Convention in the 5 years under review as well as analyse its shortfalls, especially in the area of universalization. It added that the sections on stockpile destruction, clearance and victim assistance were equally factual and illuminating. However, the United Kingdom had noted that the lack of information due to inadequate initial reporting had made the task of a thorough review of thematic areas challenging. Ambassador Liddle thus emphasized the crucial role that transparency reporting plays to allow for an accurate review of the implementation of the Convention and suggested for that element to be emphasized at the Review Conference.

On the topic of the financial challenges faced by the Convention, the United Kingdom requested for more attention to be directed to this issue and a review of non-payment factors and patterns to be carried out, so that practical measures to overcome this problem could be included in the Action Plan. In concluding his intervention, Ambassador Liddle conveyed his appreciation to the Presidency and the

ISU for consolidating and reviewing the document. He added that the United Kingdom's comments would be submitted in writing after the meeting.

Ambassador Baumann thanked the United Kingdom for the valuable comments and acknowledged the validity of the United Kingdom's concerns regarding financial matters. The Presidency clarified that a dedicated document on finances was being developed as was decided at the 9MSP to address the matter in a more exhaustive manner. Ambassador Liddle expressed his gratitude to Switzerland for the clarification and his pleasure to learn that a detailed analysis of the financing issue would be carried out.

In its contribution to the discussion, Sweden, on behalf of the Coordinators on Clearance, reported that the Coordinators had provided their comments on the Review document to the Presidency the previous evening and would consider providing additional information. Sweden noted that the document differed slightly in its use of tenses from the recent Review document of the Mine Ban Treaty in that the CCM document alluded to future recommendations while the latter only analysed past activities. Sweden pointed out that caution was needed in referring to a lack of financial assistance as an obstacle to clearance as affected States Parties also had to ensure that they fulfilled their obligations such as reporting including that international assistance could come in forms other than financial assistance. Sweden added that the COVID-19 pandemic could cause delays in clearance and other activities during this year which might need to be included in the Review document.

The President thanked the Clearance Coordinators for their comments and agreed that the pandemic would affect the implementation of the Convention and therefore, the final document would include this as a factor in reviewing activities of the year. He clarified that the document was backward looking with the inclusion of current challenges in its analysis to ensure a smooth transition to the new Action Plan where concrete future implementation measures would be adopted.

The CMC representative noted with pleasure that most of the activities planned for the first quarter of the year had still proceeded despite the COVID-19 outbreak and further stated that the CMC was impressed by the Coordination Committee's level of productivity. With regard to the Review document, the CMC informed that it would be submitting its written comments later that week. She stated that the document was substantive and contained a large amount of information. The CMC recommended that in order to strengthen the document, the names of countries should be consistently listed in the analyses throughout the document. Additionally, the CMC recommended that the document refer to the use of cluster munitions and name users such as Syria that were still perpetrating this unacceptable situation. She stressed that it would be unfortunate if CCM States Parties did not express their condemnation of the current use of cluster munitions. The CMC representative pointed out that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Article 7 reporting that year could be delayed, which should be reflected in the document. She also observed that it was apparent that the different sections were written by different individuals and that the document needed further editing to increase its coherence. She concluded by noting that the use of jargon had to be minimized in order to increase the readability of the document.

Ambassador Baumann conveyed his appreciation to the CMC for its contribution and looked forward to receiving the comments of the CMC in writing. He conceded that further editing was needed in order to have a document that was clear and that would garner consensus.

In contributing to the discussion, the ICRC representative congratulated the Presidency and the Coordinators for producing an excellent draft Review document. She indicated that many of the comments of the ICRC on the document had already been outlined by the CMC, such as the need for coherence of the document and for names of countries to be listed in the analyses. She echoed that the coronavirus outbreak would affect the implementation of the Convention for the year and explained that the usual practice of conducting risk reduction education in person had become very difficult as educators had not been permitted to travel to at risk communities to conduct their work. Nevertheless, she cautioned against using the COVID-19 outbreak as a justification for future unrelated underachievement and pointed out that the pandemic would only affect the final year of implementation out of the 5 years under review.

The President thanked the Meeting for sharing its thoughts and observations on the draft document and informed that the Presidency would endeavour to keep to the initial schedule of documentation preparation with the first draft of the document to be sent out to all States Parties on 7 April 2020 for their comments. He reminded the Meeting that consultations on the Review document would continue for the following three weeks. Thereafter, the revised version together with all other documents of the First Preparatory Meeting would be circulated to States Parties on 8 May 2020, a month before the Meeting scheduled for 8 June 2020. He further reported that the workshop to consult with mine action operators on the Review document that was originally scheduled for 6 April 2020 would likely take place in early or mid-May, so that their expert contributions to the document could also be incorporated.

Ambassador Baumann further informed that the strategy was to commence early on brainstorming elements of the new Action Plan already in the second half of May with a retreat targeted at selected stakeholders scheduled to be held in the margins of the intersessional meetings of the Mine Ban Convention in late June to discuss a zero draft of the Lausanne Action Plan.

He informed that ahead of the Second Preparatory Meeting of 4 September 2020, the Presidency would be carrying out public outreach activities in Geneva during August. Despite the cancellation of the screening of *The Remnants* in March, the public photo exhibition on the impact of cluster munitions was anticipated to proceed as planned in the second half of August. Although the photographer had informed the GICHD - which was partnering with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs on this project - that some of the photoshoots had to be cancelled due to travel restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, there was enough material for the exhibition to take place in August. The President also intended to host universalization events at the end of August.

The President intimated that if the First Preparatory Meeting on 8 June could not be held as planned since the Swiss authorities had suspended the issuance of visas until 15 June 2020 then the Meeting would possibly be held at the end of June which would delay the circulation of documents related to the First Preparatory Meeting. He added that he would continue to discuss the matter with UNODA. Nonetheless, the Presidency was at that time still operating under the original schedule and the situation would be reassessed in the near future.

## **5. Update by UNODA on financing of the Convention**

Ms. Silvia Mercogliano of UNODA informed the Meeting that as of 29 February 2020, the UN had collected slightly over USD 247'000 or 46.6% of the estimated costs of the 2RC and its two Preparatory Meetings which were estimated to cost USD 530'300. Therefore, there was still an amount of approximately USD 283'000 outstanding. The UNODA representative clarified that as of 29 February 2020, sufficient funds had been received for the First and Second Preparatory Meetings, but not for the anticipated 5-day 2RC with full conference services. She further stated that it was still too early to assess if the ability of States to contribute to the Convention would be adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In concluding her update, Ms. Mercogliano expressed her availability to provide regular updates to the Coordination Committee on the financial status of the Convention.

## **6. Update by the Implementation Support Unit**

### **6.1 Financing and operation of the ISU**

The ISU Director informed that 47% of the 2020 annual budget had been collected thus far and that the ISU was still receiving contributions in spite of the coronavirus pandemic. She echoed UNODA in stating that it remained to be seen if the rate of contributions to the ISU would be affected by the pandemic later in the year.

The Director confirmed that the ISU had been able to uphold its mandate and provide the requisite level of support to States Parties as well as the Coordination Committee albeit remotely since the introduction of the social distancing restrictions.

### **6.2 Extension requests on Convention deadlines**

The Director informed the Committee that Chile had provided updated information on its Article 4 extension request and that the document had been uploaded onto the CCM website in accordance with the laid down procedures. The Article 3 extension requests of Bulgaria and Peru were expected to be received that week and would also be circulated to all States Parties and uploaded once received. The Director reported that Analysis Group meetings were being held virtually during this period and that documents and reports would be made available in accordance with the timeline suggested by the Guidelines on the submission of extension requests adopted at the 8MSP.

## **7. Any other business:**

### **7.1 Update on Pacific CCM Workshop**

Australia reported that the Pacific universalization workshop it was organizing in partnership with New Zealand that had been planned for June 2020 in Fiji, would be postponed due to the prevailing global situation. It added that a decision on the date would only be made once clear instructions on the lifting of travel restrictions had been given by the relevant authorities.

The President expressed his thanks to Australia for the update and his expectation that a number of CCM workshops would be taking place in the second half of the year prior to the 75<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 75) First Committee.

## 7.2 Discussion on possibility of virtual First Preparatory Meeting

The United Kingdom raised the question of the possibility of convening a formal CCM meeting virtually while acknowledging that the difficulty in providing interpretation services on an online platform would have to be addressed. It enquired whether this was a considerable option, or if postponement was the only choice, should a physical First Preparatory Meeting not be able to take place on 8 June 2020.

In response, Ambassador Baumann thanked Ambassador Liddle for raising the question. He informed that he had begun discussions with his team on the alternatives to having the First Preparatory Meeting on 8 June 2020 at the Palais des Nations although no particular course of action had been decided upon. He asked UNODA if interpretation services could be provided on an online conferencing platform.

UNODA responded that the UNOG Conference Management was exploring the possibility of using Zoom or another online platform to convene UN meetings. It was still unclear whether these options could include simultaneous interpretation services. She assured that she would inform the Presidency of any updates on this matter.

The President thanked UNODA for the information and conveyed his hope that he would receive information in the following weeks on when the lockdown and travel restrictions would be lifted in order to allow for logistical decisions on the First Preparatory Meeting to be made. He added that owing to the travel restrictions to curb the coronavirus, there was a possibility that the First Preparatory Meeting would only be open to Geneva-based state representatives, with other representatives being able to attend the meeting virtually.

## 7.3 Update on Stockpile Destruction and Retention

Austria started by thanking UNODA for the important update and expressed its pleasure to learn that the Convention already had enough funds for both Preparatory Meetings that year. Austria reminded that the financing of the Convention was still a challenging issue and needed to be kept in mind when taking decisions in times of crisis that could have cost implications for the Convention.

Thereafter, Austria indicated that the Article 3 Extension Request Analysis Group would meet to consider in the established way the extension requests of Bulgaria and Peru once the official submissions had been received.

Austria also thanked the Presidency for all the hard work it had invested in the production of the Review document and for its close collaboration with the thematic Coordinators in this endeavour. Austria informed that the Coordinators on Stockpile Destruction would be sending their written comments on the document shortly.

#### 7.4 Update on International Cooperation and Assistance

The Netherlands reported that meetings had been held in the sidelines of NDM-UN 23 in February 2020 to encourage the establishment of country coalitions by Lao PDR and Somalia to enhance Article 4 implementation. There was also a consultative meeting held Germany to discuss how to effectively implement the establishments of such coalitions. The Coordinators on International Cooperation and Assistance, the Swiss Presidency and the ISU participated in all the meetings.

The Netherlands further informed that the Article 4 Analysis Group and the ISU had also met with the delegation of Lebanon in the margins of the NDM-UN 23 to discuss further it's CCM Article 4 extension request. Following that meeting, Lebanon had submitted a revised extension request that addressed the questions posed by the Analysis Group. The Analysis Group would be drafting and submitting its analysis report to the President on Lebanon's extension request shortly. Similarly, the same Analysis Group would meet to discuss the extension request of Chile the following week. Thereafter, the Group would prepare the analysis report containing a draft decision on the Chilean request for consideration by States Parties at the 2RC.

The Netherlands also indicated that the Coordinators on International Cooperation and Assistance would be sending the Presidency their written remarks on the Review document later that week.

The President thanked Austria and the Netherlands for their updates. In response to the Netherlands, he informed that he would consult with Germany regarding the country coalition promotion efforts with Lao PDR and Somalia.

Ambassador Baumann concluded the meeting by again thanking all the Coordination Committee members for their support in drafting the Review document and reiterated that the Presidency would continue to work closely with them to finalize the document.

The President further noted that the number of new COVID-19 infections had been steadily reducing over the previous 5 days, but the authorities remained cautious on their reading of this good news. With the onset of the warmer weather, people were still urged to stay indoors to further "flatten the curve". He wished the Committee members a Happy Easter and encouraged them to continue to keep safe.

+++++