

## Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

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### ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

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#### Main Issues

##### **Item I:** Stockpile Destruction as Integral Part of Mine Action

The stipulation of Article 4 constitutes one of the most stringent obligations of the Ottawa Convention, thus certainly the most visible one of it. Accordingly, swift and effective elimination of stockpiles greatly reduces the chances of further use or transfer of anti-personnel mines. Thus, in certain respects, the entire operability and clearly the credibility of the post-Ottawa process may hinge upon the full and prompt compliance with the provisions of this Article.

Accordingly, the Standing Committee of Experts on Stockpile Destruction welcomes the fact that a number of States Parties have already, well ahead of the stipulated deadline, reported full compliance with their respective Article 4 obligations, and the SCE extends its invitation to their experts to share their experiences about the completed stockpile elimination process. Their valuable input may very well soothe the concerns of some Signatory States about the costs and environmental impact incurred in this process.

##### **Item II:** Allocation of Resources - Technologies and Constraints

(Sub-items: environmental considerations, utilization of expertise, training programs)

As part of promoting the political process behind the post-Ottawa movement (in which the untiring efforts of the ICBL, ICRC and a select number of governments are greatly appreciated), the SCE on Stockpile Destruction would also want to undertake the close monitoring of the annual reports submitted to the UN Secretary General by the States Parties in accordance with the stipulations of Article 7.

This would serve a number of various purposes.

Being greatly appreciative of the reporting format as proposed and finalized by Austria, the SCE would work to insure that countries find no difficulty in reporting on the size, composition and technical parameters of their respective anti-personnel mine stockpiles. Furthermore, if necessitated, the SCE would propose modifications or amendments to the reporting format. Consequently, routine evaluation of the reports would also help identify cases where the destruction process has slowed down significantly, and save precious time for prompt intervention.

Furthermore, full disclosure and the proper evaluation of reports submitted by States Parties would greatly enhance the ability of those concerned to determine the needs of prospective countries seeking help in meeting their Article 4 obligations, as well as advise prospective donor countries about the extent and depth to which financial, technical or any other assistance is required in any one particular case.

##### **Item III:** Case Studies

(Sub-items: role of the military and the private sector, conversion of mine production facilities, outsourcing, international and regional co-operation – UN, OAS, EAPC, etc.)

The thorough and mindful evaluation of the size, composition and origin of respective anti-personnel mine stockpiles held by States Parties would yield valuable guidance in determining the preferred method of destruction and would also help avoid giving the impression that there is a "one size fits all solution" to the elimination process. In the case of small stockpiles, simple detonation maybe the

safest, surest and most cost-effective way of elimination. In the case of sizable, yet fairly homogeneous stockpiles, and provided there is a solid industrial capacity available in the State Party, disassembly may seem to be the optimal choice. Large and diversely composed stockpiles, or the lack of a solid industrial background may invite more innovative means of destruction, such as high-powered incineration.

In each case, however, it is up to the individual State Party to assess the resources it has, as well as the logistical, financial needs and environmental impact the preferred method entails. Therefore, the SCE on Stockpile Destruction does not intend to become a debating platform for the respective merits or shortcomings of the available methods of stockpile destruction, yet it is willing to commission diverse input with regard to the feasibility of various methods of destruction under a wide range of circumstances. As a way to promote the conversion of former mine production facilities, the SCE would also invite States Parties with such industrial expertise to come forward and assist non-producer states in eliminating their anti-personnel mine stockpiles.

In this regard, the SCE on Stockpile Destruction also intends to work very closely with the SCE on Technologies with a view to promote new innovations among States Parties and relevant organizations in this field of mine action, as well. Accordingly, a database of industrial/research capacities and capabilities may also be commissioned.

Furthermore, the SCE on Stockpile Destruction also intends to highlight the valuable and readily available role national militaries could and should play in this area of mine action, as well. By definition, national militaries have the expertise, the precise data of their holding, the logistical background, the well guarded installations and the trained personnel so as to help States Parties meet their respective obligations under Article 4 of the Ottawa Convention. The role of the national militaries, thus, must be highlighted at every step of the elimination process, from preparing and submitting the annual Article 7 reports to the Depository, through providing logistical support for collecting stockpiles from troop locations to central storage sites, to volunteering expertise in handling and guarding anti-personnel mine stockpiles as they await final elimination.

**Item IV:** Stockpile Maintenance Programs, including stockpiles in non-State Parties

The SCE on Stockpile Destruction also notes with concern that the overwhelming majority of anti-personnel mine stockpiles are in the hands of nations not yet Party to the Ottawa Convention. As part of promoting the political agenda, i.e. keeping the momentum of the ratification process, the SCE intends to work closely with others to monitor and evaluate this process, and to engage in active dialogue those states which argue that they would find it difficult to comply with the stipulations of Article 4 for various reasons – sizable stockpiles, lack of technical or financial resources, lack of proper technical background and expertise. Also, part of the political process would be to seek interim assurances from governments, so far reluctant to sign on to the Ottawa movement, that they would volunteer information about their stockpile maintenance programs, reduce the number of their disparate storage sites and verify that these storage sites are properly guarded. It is of especially great importance in the case of countries situated in potentially conflict prone regions, since in a crisis situation even the temporary disintegration of the chain of command and the role of central authorities may lead to widespread looting of military storage sites.

**Objectives:**

The SCE on Stockpile Destruction expects to prepare a progress report on stockpile destruction and maintenance programs, commission and distribute case studies about the merits and shortcomings of the various forms of stockpile destruction under different circumstances, commission various databases (industrial capacities, prospective donors, etc.), and prepare a report of its proceedings to the Second Meeting of the States Parties to be held in Geneva, in September of 2000.

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