

Initial thoughts on the Second Review Conference

Food-for-thought prepared by the President-Designate of the Second Review Conference, Ambassador Susan Eckey of Norway

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The potential of the Second Review Conference:

Let us make the Second Review Conference one of the most important events in the life of the Convention since it was opened for signature in December 1997. Let us, both with respect to the Review Conference and the year leading up to it, do the following:

- Communicate the impressive progress that has been made towards a mine free world in the first decade of the Convention and focus on the remaining challenges for the States Parties and our partners towards the full implementation and compliance of the Convention.
- Focus the world's attention on the humanitarian essence of the Convention: the rights of people and our commitment to survivors and to mine-affected communities. In doing so, we can recommit our support to a life in dignity for all who every day live with the consequences of landmines.
- Make sure that the civilian population affected by landmines are heard and involved, including by applying a gender perspective to mine action.
- Reinvigorate national implementation and compliance efforts and enhance national ownership among States Parties to fulfill their obligations on International Cooperation and Assistance, Clearance, Stockpile Destruction and Victim Assistance.
- Promote the international norm created by the Convention that use of anti-personnel mines is prohibited and unacceptable, continue the universalisation efforts and encourage further international cooperation towards strengthening human security.

Realising the potential of the Second Review Conference:

The Second Review Conference should be held at the highest possible level. This should contribute to high level commitments necessary to pursue the aims of the Convention during the next five years. As was the case at the First Review Conference, a high level segment should take place during the last two days of the Review Conference.

The relevance of the Second Review Conference should be made known to a wide audience around the world. The President-Designate, the host country and the current President – as well as all other States Parties and our partners – should vigorously communicate throughout the year in all possible ways about the humanitarian essence of the Convention and the importance of the Review Conference.

Our efforts should not be limited to a five-day event at the end of the year. We all need to be active worldwide throughout 2009. Already several States Parties, with the support of the European Union, will convene regional workshops to support valuable preparations for the Review Conference. In addition, other opportunities should be sought to raise the profile of

this important event – not because the Second Review Conference is an end in itself, but rather because it will be a significant means to advance our common cause.

The States Parties are fortunate to have a dedicated host country. The commitment of Colombia at the highest levels to the Review Conference will help ensure its success. Moreover, Colombia is well placed to illustrate the reality of what amounts to the *story* of the Convention in 2009. Through field visits, media tours and other efforts, Colombia can show the world in real terms (a) that measurable progress has been made, (b) that efforts to implement the Convention that are ongoing, and (c) that significant challenges remain.

Substantive outcomes:

Regarding the substance of the Second Review Conference, the First Review Conference provides a good example. For instance, while the “review” in “review conference” suggests that we look backward, there is no point in doing so unless we derive lessons from the past in order to do better in the future. Therefore, in addition to a comprehensive **review**, we should again produce an **action plan** to guide our efforts in the pursuit of the Convention’s aims during the subsequent five year period.

We should also seize the opportunity to assess the Convention’s implementation machinery, including by establishing a meeting programme that makes good sense for the Convention during the period 2010-2014. In addition, we may wish to again develop a concise, powerful and memorable high level **declaration**.

Finally, we will need to formally consider requests for extensions of Article 5 deadlines that three States Parties have indicated they will submit in 2009 and we have the opportunity to follow-up an extension requests already granted.

The organization of the Second Review Conference:

As was the case in 2004, it is proposed that the Second Review Conference be divided between working sessions during the first three days of meeting (i.e., 30 November – 2 December) and a high level segment on the last two days (i.e., 3 & 4 December).

The intention would be to see the Review Conference immediately begin its work on the morning of Monday 30 November on the basis of draft documents submitted in advance of the Review Conference. That is, addresses to the meeting by distinguished guests and general statements would be discouraged at this time with the time for such participation being on 3 & 4 December. By the end of the third day – Wednesday 2 December – it is hoped that the States Parties would be in a position to recommend for adoption at the end of the meeting the final report and its annexes.

The involvement of a wide range of actors:

In preparing the substance of the Second Review Conference, the President-Designate is committed to drawing on the input of a wide range of actors, including the 9MSP President, the Co-Chairs, the Contact Group Coordinators and other States Parties. The field presence of the United Nations will also be an asset as will the historically vast contributions of the ICRC and ICBL. Civil society is, and has been, a driving force and key partner in this Convention. The support of the ISU will be key.

The success of the Second Review Conference will by many be measured by the progress that we have made the pursuit of our core aims. In this regard, the President-Designate looks toward the current President and the Co-Chairs to play a leading role in catalysing further progress in the areas of universalisation, stockpile destruction, mine clearance, victim assistance, transparency reporting and national legislation.

The road ahead:

If the States Parties are generally satisfied with the approach suggested by the President-Designate and her team, the next steps would be as follows:

30 March

- Distribution of a draft agenda, draft programme and draft rules of procedure for the Second Review Conference
- Distribution of a discussion paper intended to help States Parties in structuring input on the preparation of the substantive documents

29 May: First Preparatory Meeting

- Discussion and recommendation of the procedural documents for the Review Conference
- Input provided to the President-Designate on the preparation of substantive documents

July

- Distribution of early drafts of substantive documents

3-4 September: Second Preparatory Meeting

- Discussion on draft substantive documents