



CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION

Workshop on the Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

15-18 May 2012

*Co-organized with the Ministry of Foreign
and European Affairs of the Republic of
Croatia*

Introduction

Pursuant to RACVIAC Programme for 2012, the Cooperative Security Environment Pillar organized and executed the “Workshop on the Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions” in the period of 15-18 May 2012, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia.

This was the fourth activity related to Cluster Munitions organized by RACVIAC and its partners. The purpose of this Workshop was to share the latest developments related to the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). Objectives included the following:

- To provide the participants with an overview of the provisions of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, particularly the obligations of the States Parties;
- To inform the participants about the results of the second meeting of States Parties held in September 2011 in Beirut, Lebanon;

- To provide a forum for discussion on the implementation of the Convention in South Eastern Europe (SEE) with focus on national strategies, plans for implementation, progress reports, possible international and regional cooperation and needs for support from outside the region.

The Workshop comprised presentations and discussions.

Participation



Group Photo

Altogether 30 participants attended the Workshop, representing SEE countries, as well as other countries and international organizations, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Germany, Lebanon, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro, Serbia, Landmine Survivors Initiatives – Bosnia and Herzegovina, mine action centres of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHMIC), Croatia (CROMIC) and Serbia (SERMIC), Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC), International Trust Fund to Enhance Human Security (ITF), Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA), South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

* Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

Overview of the Workshop

During the Workshop opening ceremony Ambassador Nikola Todorcevski, Director of RACVIAC, Ms Vesna Batistic Kos, PhD, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, Ms Dijana Plestina, PhD, Director, Government's Office for Demining, Croatia, H.E. Mr Henrik Ofstad, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to the Republic of Croatia, and Mr Zdravko Modrusan, Head of Croatian Mine Action Centre, addressed the audience.



Opening Session

The Workshop was divided into four main segments. The first segment focused on the universalization of the Convention. Ms Dijana Plestina, PhD, started off by providing a general overview of the significance of humanitarian and security conventions in today's world. She underlined the disproportionate harm caused by cluster munitions, the unacceptable usage, and a very high rate of unexploded cluster bombs that put civilians in danger.

Ms Anesa Kundurovic, MA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina) gave a global overview of the signatures and ratifications of the Convention. As a positive example of solidarity to be followed she mentioned Jamaica, which ratified the Convention, but has no stockpiles and was not affected. For the SEE region, it is important to note that Serbia has not joined yet, but expressed willingness to do so in the future. Experts agreed that the countries such as the United States, Russia, India, Pakistan and others, which have stockpiles, were not expected to

join, regardless of how strongly the Convention prevented them from using and selling cluster munitions.

On his way from Georgia, Mr Zachary Taylor from the UNDP joined the Workshop and introduced the efforts made by the UN. He highlighted the necessity of accelerating clearance, as well as the importance of regional meetings promoting the CCM.

Ms Neda Dojcinovic (ICRC) informed the audience about legal aspects of the implementation of international humanitarian laws at the national levels and drew the attention to the model laws available on the ICRC website.

On behalf of Cluster Munitions Coalition, Mr Ramiz Becirovic (Landmine Survivor Initiative – Bosnia and Herzegovina) presented the approaches to universalization campaigning. According to the latest data, 111 countries signed the Convention and 71 already ratified it, while 40 ratifications are ongoing. Out of these, 6 are close to finishing the ratification process.

Mr Ahmad Arafa (First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Lebanese Republic to the UN Office in Geneva), our special guest, shared national and personal experience from the Second Meeting of the States Parties in Beirut. He highlighted the decisions made concerning the intersessional meetings, coordination committee meetings, working groups and the establishment of the International Support Unit (ISU) in Geneva. He also mentioned that his country would prepare the next progress report and present it to the States Parties to the CCM at their third meeting in Oslo, in September 2012.

Closing the topic, Mr Miljenko Vahtaric (CROMAC) gave an insight into the Croatian humanitarian mission in Libya.

In the second segment, representatives of the mine action centres (Albania, BHMAL, CROMAC, SERMAC) and international organizations (NPA, ITF) informed the audience on their role and the status of clearance of cluster munitions remnants in South Eastern Europe. It is obvious that there are still cluster contaminated and

suspected areas in the countries of the region to be cleared. However, the countries cannot solve the problem without the help of the international community and further funding should be available for this purpose.

The third segment focused on stockpile reduction and retention. Mr Faiz M. Paktian (GICHD) briefed the participants on international standards in stockpile destruction. Representatives of Croatia, Germany, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹ presented their achievements in stockpile destruction.

Ms Sanja Vakula Kudumoja gave an overview of the considerable achievements that the Centre for Testing, Development and Training, Ltd, made at the international level in the field of certification of demining machinery and other equipment.

Finally, in the fourth segment victim assistance was reviewed. Mr Ramiz Becirovic underlined that victim assistance should be a legal obligation in all countries, adding that support should be adjusted to personal needs, as family members are often affected as well and should be taken care of, while peer support should be integrated in institutions.

Summary/Recommendations

The Workshop proved to be successful and well organized. The event covered the latest developments in the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and gave an opportunity for discussions between the representatives of the SEE countries, international organizations supporting the implementation efforts, and NGOs involved.

Countries continue their efforts and make further steps in eliminating the danger caused by cluster munitions. At the same time, the presentations clearly showed that in the SEE countries there are still stockpiles and areas contaminated or suspected of contamination with cluster

munitions. Therefore, clearance and destruction of stockpiles remain important and urgent tasks.

Also, there are more actions required related to cluster munitions identified in Vientiane and Beirut during the Meetings of the States Parties in the fields of partnership, universalization, victim assistance, international cooperation and assistance, exchange of information, etc.

Participants considered the Workshop valuable for their future work and beneficial for security in the region. Participants also agreed on the necessity of conducting similar workshops in the future.

The cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia was excellent. In particular, their contribution to preparing the agenda and inviting the experts was certainly the most important factor for the success of the Workshop.

The process of eliminating the danger of cluster munitions requires continuous efforts. Therefore, RACVIAC stands ready to continue the series of workshops on cluster munitions in 2013, serving as a platform for discussions and initial point of cooperation.

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