

Press Release



NIGERIA FREE OF ALL KNOWN ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES

Geneva, 20 June 2011 – Nigeria has become the latest country to declare that it has cleared all mined areas according to its obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or *Ottawa Convention*.

“Nigeria is proud to declare today that it is confident that it has ensured the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control in which anti-personnel mines were known or suspected to be emplaced, in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention”, said Mr. Kayode Laro of Nigeria’s mission to the United Nations in Geneva.

Nigeria’s statement came on the first day of the meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention’s Standing Committees. These meetings, which are taking place from 20 to 24 June in Geneva, amount to one of the largest annual gatherings of landmines experts and diplomats. Over 400 delegates representing more than 100 States and dozens of international and non-governmental organizations are taking part.

Nigeria’s efforts to comply with its mine clearance obligations involved surveying over 150,000 square kilometres in 11 of Nigeria’s States. A total of 820 anti-personnel mines, 325 anti-vehicle mines and 17,516 other explosive hazards were destroyed. “The fact that the main challenge faced by Nigeria concerned unexploded ordnance points to how valuable this Convention is in ensuring that not only landmines but that all other explosive remnants of war are dealt with by affected countries”, said Kayode Laro.

In fulfilling its obligations, Nigeria benefited from the presence of a home-grown mine clearance capacity. “Whereas much of the world’s mine clearance efforts are run by western organizations, we wish to make it known that a great deal of expertise exists within Nigeria and that this capacity is available for use by others”, said Kayode Laro.

Nigeria will now proceed in preparing a formal *declaration of completion*, to be presented to the international community at the Convention’s Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties, which will be held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from 28 November to 2 December 2011. With Nigeria having indicated completion of its mine clearance programme, there are now 17 of 54 States Parties that originally reported mined areas that have completed the task of clearing all such areas.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

The AP Mine Ban Convention was adopted in Oslo in 1997 and was opened for signature in Ottawa the same year; it entered into force in 1999. To date 156 States are parties to the Convention, 152 of them now no longer hold stocks; almost 44 million mines have been destroyed by the States Parties.

34 of 50 States that at one time manufactured anti-personnel mines are now bound by the Convention’s ban on production. Most other parties have put in place moratoria on production and / or transfers of mines.

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Demining has resulted in millions of square metres of once dangerous land being released for normal human activity.

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For more information, interviews or information regarding the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention or the meetings of the Convention's Standing Committees, please email: ISU@APMineBanConvention.org or contact Laila Rodriguez at +41 (0) 22 906 1679.