

## **President's Final Declaration**

### **Towards a mine-free world**

20 years ago the drastic short and long term humanitarian consequences of anti-personnel mines motivated the international community to address these inhumane weapons with urgency. States, both mine-affected and others, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and numerous other non-governmental organizations united in an unprecedented partnership to ban anti-personnel landmines.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in Vienna, States Parties reaffirmed their resolute commitment to a mine free world. States Parties underlined their determination to continue the efforts to end the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines on national level as well as within the cooperative structure of the Convention. To this end, a strong partnership between States and civil society is instrumental to achieve our shared goal.

Millions of people are direct or indirect beneficiaries of the Convention. Over the past two decades the categorical prohibition of use, stockpiling, production and transfer has substantially changed the facts on the ground. Over 53 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines have been destroyed. Of the 95 States Parties that reported stockpiled anti-personnel mines, 92 have completed their stockpile destruction programs. 30 States Parties completed mine clearance under the Convention. States Parties reconverted vast areas of land throughout the world back to human use and productivity. Tens or even hundreds of thousands of lives have been spared. Considerable progress has been achieved in addressing the needs and ensuring the social and economic reintegration of mine victims, both direct and indirect victims. The innovative provisions on victim assistance have set a new standard for other legal instruments.

The progress achieved since 1997 is outstanding. Nonetheless, on the 20th anniversary there is no time for complacency. After years of decrease in mine victims, recently the number of new victims started to increase again, largely due to the use of improvised anti-personnel mines by non-state actors. In this context, the full implementation of the Convention is particularly important, as it provides the international legal framework for all mines designed to be exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a person and that will incapacitate, injure or kill one or more persons. States Parties again emphasized that any use of anti-personnel mines by any actor under any circumstance is unacceptable and to be condemned. As we approach 2025, States Parties reaffirmed the need to intensify their demining efforts and to address the remaining challenges towards completion of Article 5.

While mine clearance proceeds, the international community needs to do its utmost to prevent new victims also by mine risk education and awareness. Living up to the promise of addressing the scourge of anti-personnel mines States Parties reaffirmed their commitment to ensure the care and rehabilitation of mine victims, respect for their rights, as well as their full, equal and effective participation in society, also beyond 2025.

States Parties welcomed the accession of Sri Lanka. With 163 States Parties the Convention has made important progress towards universalisation. Today, the acceptance of the norm against the production, transfer and use of anti-personal mines extends beyond States Parties. To rid the world once and for all of the harm caused by anti-personnel mines States Parties reaffirmed their commitment to promote universalization.

As States Parties are determined to end the plight of the people and communities affected by anti-personnel mines for good, the States Parties affirmed the aspiration of meeting the Convention's goals to the fullest extent possible by 2025. Given the remaining challenges, redoubling our efforts to fulfil the aspiration is imperative to achieve a world free of anti-personnel mines by 2025.