

# *United Nations Press Release*

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*ROUND-UP RELEASE*

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

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## **MORE THAN 130 COUNTRIES AGREE TO STEP UP ACTION TO ENSURE SUCCESS OF LANDMINES TREATY**

States Parties to the Convention banning anti-personnel mines have confirmed their commitment to take strong action to fulfill the humanitarian aims of the landmark international treaty.

"Together we have achieved a great deal in implementing the Convention and promoting its universal acceptance. However, between now and the Convention's first Review Conference in 2004, additional efforts will be required to ensure that the Convention lives up to its humanitarian promise," said Ambassador Jean Lint of Belgium, President of the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties which concluded today.

The Fourth Meeting took stock of success in a number of key areas. By the close of the meeting, 128 States had acceded to the Convention - a remarkable achievement given that the Convention is a little more than five years old. In addition, it was reported that the States Parties have destroyed more than 27 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines.

The Meeting took equal note of the challenges that remain. "With important deadlines approaching for the destruction of stockpiled mines and mine clearance, we must redouble our efforts to ensure full implementation of this important humanitarian instrument," said Ambassador Lint. "In this regard, I am particularly pleased that relevant actors have agreed to be steadfast in ensuring that by the Review Conference a significant renewal of our collective commitment is made to finish the job of eliminating anti-personnel mines."

"I am also heartened that States Parties have agreed to urge armed, non-state actors to cease and renounce the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines," said Ambassador Lint, noting that an increasing number of conflicts are taking place within - rather than between - States.

More than 700 delegates representing more than 130 States and dozens of international and non-governmental organizations took part in the Convention's fourth annual meeting. "The participation of such a larger number of actors demonstrates that the unique spirit of this Convention is alive and well," said Ambassador Lint. "In addition, the practical-minded approach of the States Parties, which we have seen this week, will serve us well as we continue on the path to eradicating anti-personnel mines."

Background information

- Negotiations on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction were completed in Oslo on September 18, 1997. On March 1, 1999 it entered into force and as of September 20, 2002 128 states had acceded to the Convention.

- The week of September 16-20, 2002, States Parties to the Convention held their fourth annual meeting in Geneva. A total of 131 States participated in the Meeting: 89 States Parties and 42 observer States. These States were joined by several international organisations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, UNICEF, UNDP, ILO, WHO, and a large number of non-governmental organisations and institutes, including the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

- Under the presidency of Ambassador Jean Lint of Belgium, the Fourth Meeting held a general exchange of views, in which 69 delegations took part.

- The Meeting included States Parties agreeing to focus with even greater clarity on the achievement of the Convention's core humanitarian aims: clearing mined land, assisting victims, destroying stockpiled mines and universalizing the ban on anti-personnel mines.

- States Parties placed a strong emphasis on meeting the four-year deadline for destroying stockpiled mines and the ten-year deadline for clearing mined land. The first deadlines for stockpile destruction occur on March 1, 2003.

- States Parties took note of the imperative to provide assistance to landmine survivors, especially given the fact that 15,000 to 20,000 landmine victims each year are added to the hundreds of thousands who already live with the disabilities caused by mines.

- To help ensure the full implementation of the Convention, States Parties placed a renewed emphasis on resource mobilisation and the open exchange of information. To promote universal acceptance of the Convention, States Parties took aim at those states that still use, produce or possess anti-personnel mines, and those armed, non-state actors that do the same.

- The Fourth Meeting demonstrated the continued vibrancy of the Convention's unique culture of practical-mindedness, partnership between states and non-governmental / international organizations, and cooperation between partners from all parts of the world.

- On the margins of the Fourth Meeting, important discussions were held on promoting adherence to the aims of the Convention by armed, non-state actors and on how demining can be used as a confidence building in peace-processes after internal and interstate conflicts.

- States Parties began discussions on preparations for the Convention's First Review Conference, which will be held in 2004. At that time important gains in addressing the global landmine problem will be required and States Parties accepted that stepped up action is required.

- The Meeting agreed to hold the Fifth Meeting of States Parties in Bangkok, Thailand, September 15-19, 2003, and that meetings of the four Standing Committees (on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies; Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration; Stockpile Destruction; and General Status and Operation of the Convention) would be held in Geneva February 3-7 and May 12-16, 2003.