

## **Statement by Canada**

### **4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

Let me begin by thanking and congratulating you, Mr. President, your colleagues on the Coordinating Committee, the Implementation Support Unit and the Secretariat, as well as the representatives of Switzerland, for the tireless efforts that have gone into preparing this meeting.

I want also to extend Canada's gratitude to our outgoing President, His Excellency Jose Rizo Castellon, Vice-President of Nicaragua, to Foreign Minister Aguirre and to the other Nicaraguan representatives. Their steadfast commitment has inspired the work this past year under the Ottawa Convention, and we count on their continued leadership.

As Canada's newly-appointed Ambassador for Mine Action, I consider it a great personal pleasure and privilege to be here today, joining the outstanding community of governments, organizations and individuals who have made the campaign against anti-personnel landmines one of the great international success stories of our times.

We are convening on the eve of some important milestones in that campaign. On Wednesday, we will observe the fifth anniversary of the Oslo negotiations. December will mark five years since the Convention was opened in Ottawa, meeting an overwhelming response as 122 states joined as initial signatories. Canada congratulates its Norwegian friends for the anniversary events held last week in Oslo. And we look forward to welcoming international partners and friends in Ottawa, November 29 to December 2, when Mines Action Canada and the Canadian Landmine Foundation will be marking these past achievements and seeking to generate momentum to meet the challenges for the work ahead.

For it is of course important that we mark past achievements and milestones, and prepare for the even more significant milestones that lie ahead. For instance, time is closing quickly on our 2004 Review Conference, for which Canada would be most pleased to consider serving as host.

But on all such occasions, it is crucial that we maintain our focus on the future, and on a relentless pursuit of the core humanitarian objectives of the Convention.

The ICBL's annual Landmine Monitor represents an invaluable instrument to that end, and the just-released 2002 report has again indicated encouraging progress on a number of these fronts: fewer new mine victims, vast tracks of mined land cleared, increased destruction of stockpiles.

And key to extending, and ultimately sustaining, advances on all of these fronts, the report notes the increased number of States Parties, and evidence of even broader recognition that the case against these weapons is incontrovertible -- morally and politically incontrovertible.

Less than five years into the life of the Ottawa Convention, fully 126 states have formally accepted its obligations. Canada pays tribute to those who have recently joined the ranks of States Parties: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria and Suriname.

And we are confident that many more states will do so in the near future.

Partnership is crucial to moving forward in this regard. This year we have worked on numerous workshops and other projects to promote understanding of the Convention alongside partners including: Australia, Belgium, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guyana, Japan, the Netherlands, Suriname, Thailand, Tunisia, the OAS, the ICBL, ICRC and the Implementation Support Unit. In a similar vein, Canada has initiated a series of military dialogues aimed at allaying the concerns of military authorities in a number of countries. We encourage other States Parties in a position to do so to join us in this effort.

Without discounting the good news, it is also incumbent on this meeting to take due note of some significant, disturbing developments. In this connection, I want to highlight Canada's particular concern about reports over the past year of the use of anti-personnel mines by countries such as India, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, and Burma.

With such concerns in mind, and with a significant number of states yet to join the Convention, we must pursue every opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue on the humanitarian imperatives of the global ban on anti-personnel mines. The meeting earlier today of the informal Universalization Contact Group, coordinated by the Canadian delegation, and discussions here later this week on the General Status and Operation of the Convention represent opportunities to consider ways to achieve true universalization.

Addressing the plight of landmine survivors and victims is a core priority of our work together, and the Convention has been quite successful in mobilizing resources for this purpose. For its part, the Canadian government and NGOs, such as the Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief and Garneau International, have supported and implemented programs across the world to improve the quality of life of landmine survivors. We welcome the results of the UNMAS-led Consultative Process under the auspices of the Convention's Standing Committee on Victim Assistance, and as Co-Chair of that process in partnership with Honduras, we look forward to the Committee's deliberations this week. To be credible, in our view, this work must produce practical conclusions that will ultimately have real impact on the effectiveness of assistance to victims and survivors; and to achieve that, it must help strengthen the voices of landmine survivors.

Canada also welcomes the advances that have been made in stockpile destruction, mine clearance, and mine risk education. On stockpiles, we have provided technical assistance and funding to assist states to meet their obligations in the Americas, in Africa and in Eastern Europe to meet their obligations; and we will maintain a strong commitment to supporting the completion of destruction within the deadlines established by the Convention. Similarly, in demining and mine risk education, Canada has worked alongside partners such as the Canadian Auto Workers, the Canadian International Demining Corps and UNICEF to advance the cause, and we continue to attach particular priority to Landmine Impact Surveys.

Finally, let me mention the issue of facilitating and clarifying compliance with the Convention, a question on which Canada has been coordinating a collegial and constructive dialogue. These discussions have revealed a broadly-shared view among governments on the importance of responding to allegations of serious violations of the Convention in ways that are at once cooperative, flexible, and consistent with the provisions of the Convention. In this vein, over the

past year, Canada has found that its own low-key, informal interventions seeking clarification on some relatively modest compliance concerns, have been received by the governments concerned in a similar spirit of cooperation.

The Canadian delegation looks forward to our deliberations on these and the other important issues on our agenda. As a newcomer to this community, I especially look forward to hearing and learning a great deal from the experiences and perspectives of those who have championed and nurtured the campaign to rid our planet of a weapon that has no justifiable place in today's world. Significant strides have been made but we are yet far from achieving the goal. I want, in closing, to assure this gathering that Canada remains, and will remain, steadfast in its determination to pursue that aim in concert with its partners -- governmental and non-governmental alike -- in all parts of the world. And we pledge our support to you, Mr. President, in ensuring that this meeting makes a meaningful contribution to this vital enterprise.