

Statement of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines

To the Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty

Delivered by Stephen Goose (Human Rights Watch), Head of ICBL Delegation

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Mr. President, distinguished delegates,

I speak on behalf of the more than 1,400 NGOs in more than 90 countries that constitute the ICBL. We attach special importance to this Fourth Meeting of States Parties, in that it comes five years after the completion of the negotiations and adoption of the Mine Ban Treaty in Oslo. I think that it is safe to say that few if any envisioned in September 1997 that we would be where we are today.

On 18 September 1997, when President Selebi of South Africa gaveled the negotiations closed, the ICBL hailed the Mine Ban Treaty as a “gift to humanity.” Since that day, three-quarters of the world’s nations have formally committed to the Mine Ban Treaty (also known as the Ottawa Convention), and many other nations are poised to join in the near future. Since that day, some 30 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines have been destroyed. Since that day, not a single nation has openly traded antipersonnel mines, and it appears that fewer than a dozen countries have produced antipersonnel mines.

Far fewer governments are now using antipersonnel mines. Global funding for mine action programs over the past five years totaled more than \$1 billion, or more than three times that of the previous five years. The number of new mine victims each year has significantly decreased in some of the most mine-affected countries.

We have changed the reality on the ground, which is of course the most meaningful measure of the success of the Mine Ban Treaty. But there are related accomplishments worth noting. Working together, the ICBL and pro-ban governments have created the groundbreaking and unique Landmine Monitor system, and the innovative intersessional work program, as well as the Global Landmine Impact Survey initiative. Effective implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty has been greatly enhanced by the creation of the Coordination Committee and the Implementation Support Unit, as well as the Universalization Contact Group, the Article 7/Article 9 Contact Group, and the Sponsorship Program.

We have maintained and even intensified the government-NGO partnership that characterized the Ottawa Process and was key to the success of the September 1997 negotiations, as well as to the awarding of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize to the ICBL and its then-coordinator Jody Williams. We have shown that a new diplomacy, based on

humanitarian imperatives, and driven by government-civil society cooperation, can succeed.

Few if any developments in the international humanitarian and security fields can point to such a record of progress and concrete impact. But we must not become complacent at this point, as the work is far from over. Last year, we told States Parties: “Landmines continue to take an appalling number of innocent lives. Landmines continue to pose a crippling humanitarian and socio-economic problem in too many countries. Too many governments and rebel groups continue to use antipersonnel mines, with too little outcry from the rest of the world.” Regrettably, this litany of woes is still true today.

Ninety countries are still affected to some degree by landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). Landmine Monitor recorded new landmine/UXO casualties in 69 countries in 2001. We estimate there were 15-20,000 new landmine/UXO casualties last year, adding yet more to the total number of survivors who need long-term assistance. In the past year, India and Pakistan have engaged in some of the biggest mine-laying operations anywhere in the world since 1997, and perhaps in decades.

And the pace of progress has slowed in some important respects. Even with the recent good news about Afghanistan, Comoros and Central African Republic, only six new States Parties have been added thus far in 2002, compared to 13 in 2001 and 19 in 2000. Global mine action funding stagnated, or fell slightly, in 2001, the first time in a decade that a significant increase has not been registered. It is increasingly evident that at current levels of funding and demining, many mine-affected States Parties will not meet the ten-year deadline for completion of mine clearance.

If we are to accomplish the humanitarian objectives of the Mine Ban Treaty, it is crucial that the treaty continues to be given high priority, that the political will remains strong and that financial commitments are sustained.

Fourth Meeting of States Parties

This Fourth Meeting of States Parties can play an important function in ensuring ongoing success. We hope that States Parties will use the opportunity not only to report on steps they have taken to implement the treaty in the past year, but also to announce new plans, activities and financial commitments. We hope that a concrete and dynamic action plan will emerge from this meeting.

In terms of specific matters we anticipate States Parties will consider this week, we strongly urge States Parties to endorse the Standing Committee reports and to act urgently on their recommendations. We encourage States Parties to expand their support to the Sponsorship Program, which has contributed to both effective implementation and universalization of the Mine Ban Treaty. We encourage States Parties to embrace the suggestions in the Article 7 Paper, including greater use of the supplementary information category and voluntary Form J, and electronic submission of Article 7 reports.

The ICBL enthusiastically supports the offer of Thailand to host the Fifth Meeting of States Parties. We stress the importance of early and thorough preparations for the first Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty in 2004; we are pleased to see from the President's paper that these preparations will be carried out in a transparent and inclusive fashion, with participation from the ICBL and ICRC.

I would like now to turn to a number of issues areas, highlighting Landmine Monitor findings, our observations, and concerns for each. First, universalization, then state party compliance, and use by those not party to the treaty.

Universalization

While the pace of universalization has slowed, the overall total is very impressive for a young convention. There are now 128 countries that have given their consent to be bound. Another 18 countries have signed but not yet ratified, bringing the total number of countries legally committed to no further use of antipersonnel mines to 146.

We welcome Nigeria, Algeria, DR Congo, Suriname, Angola, and, as of last week, Afghanistan, and, as we were told Monday, Central African Republic and Comoros, as new members since we met in Managua for the Third Meeting of States Parties. It is particularly notable that Afghanistan, Angola and DR Congo, all of which used antipersonnel mines in the recent past, have now committed themselves to complete rejection of the weapon. The addition of these seriously mine-affected States is very significant in demonstrating the ever-growing acceptance of a total mine ban.

Nearly 20 countries have indicated their intention to ratify or accede to the Mine Ban Treaty in the near future, including Burundi, Cameroon, Cyprus, East Timor, Gambia, Greece, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Turkey and Yugoslavia.

Non-State Actors

Another important aspect of universalization – not of the treaty itself, but of the international norm it represents—is engagement of non-state actors. We appreciated that the Final Declaration from Managua included language about the importance of a halt to mine use by non-state actors. Many of the NGOs involved with the ICBL have been increasingly attempting to educate and convince non-state actors about the importance of banning antipersonnel mines. States Parties should give greater attention to the NSA landmine issue, and should support efforts to obtain strong ban commitments from non-state actors. When in a position to do so, States Parties should help create the conditions to allow international and national humanitarian NGOs to engage safely and expeditiously with non-state actors on a landmines ban. We have been encouraged by some developments in the past year, especially new commitments to ban antipersonnel mines from NSAs in Sudan, the Philippines, and northern Iraq, and the creation of a Working Group on non-state actors in the European Parliament.

State Party Compliance Concerns

Landmine Monitor has not received any credible reports or allegations of use, production or transfer of antipersonnel mines by a State Party during the most recent reporting period (since May 2001).

With respect to last year's allegation regarding use by Uganda, we have been pleased that Uganda has taken the allegation seriously, and informed States Parties in both intersessional meetings in 2002 of its intention to investigate the matter, in the spirit of openness and cooperation called for in the Mine Ban Treaty. We look forward to further updates regarding progress on this matter.

Another matter of great concern regarding compliance involves Tajikistan. This was first raised by ICBL last year, but has apparently gone largely ignored by most States Parties. We reported last year that Russian forces based in Tajikistan have laid antipersonnel mines inside Tajikistan, along Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan. A Russian Foreign Ministry letter to Landmine Monitor stated that the mine laying took place after May 2000, even though the Mine Ban Treaty entered into force for Tajikistan in April 2000. In December 2001 a senior Russian Federal Border Service official said the mine laying took place with the full knowledge and consent of the Tajik government. This would seemingly constitute a violation of Tajikistan's obligation under Article 1 not to "assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party." The government of Tajikistan has not responded to Landmine Monitor inquiries about this matter over the past two years.

Moreover, Tajikistan has not met its Mine Ban Treaty requirements to submit transparency reports and to adopt national implementation measures. It has not started or planned for stockpile destruction, which must be completed by 1 April 2004.

This is all particularly disturbing because Tajikistan's status as one of the few States Parties in its region is very important. The ICBL encourages Tajikistan to discuss its difficulties in implementing the Mine Ban Treaty in an open and transparent manner. It is essential that Tajikistan make every effort to come into compliance as soon as possible. Tajikistan will benefit, and the Mine Ban Treaty will be stronger, for it.

The ICBL urges States Parties to consult with the Tajik government to seek clarification and establish the facts regarding compliance with the Mine Ban Treaty. This should be done in the "spirit of cooperation" called for in the treaty's Article 8, under which States Parties have agreed to "consult and cooperate with each other" to facilitate compliance with obligations.

A general compliance concern is late Article 7 reporting. Article 7 reports are not optional and 180 days after entry into force is a legal deadline, not a target date. As of 6 September 2002, a total of 28 States Parties were late submitting their initial Article 7 transparency measures reports. Some of these reports are more than three years late. About 22% of States Parties have failed to meet this treaty obligation, though it should be

noted that percentage is a marked improvement from a year ago, when 37% were late. Those States Parties who have complied, as well as the members of the Article 7 contact group who have facilitated compliance, are to be commended.

Finally, it is worth noting at this time that there appears to be a small number of States Parties that may have difficulty meeting the four-year deadline for completion of stockpile destruction. Seventeen States Parties have yet to begin the destruction process, several of which have deadlines in 2003, including two in March 2003 (Djibouti and FYR Macedonia). Djibouti is the only State Party with a 1 March 2003 deadline that has not begun destruction and has not submitted an Article 7 Report or otherwise revealed information about its stockpiles or destruction plans. FYR Macedonia reportedly has a plan in place. We are also concerned about Turkmenistan, which has a deadline of March 2003. Turkmenistan has begun destruction, but reported a stockpile of nearly 762,000 mines as of 1 October 2001 and asked for a seven-year extension of the deadline. When told there is no provision for extension in the treaty, it said it intended to meet the deadline, but this bears further consultations by States Parties. And, as just noted, we are concerned about the situation of Tajikistan, which has a 1 April 2004 deadline.

Use of Mines by Those not Party to the Mine Ban Treaty

The ICBL has always maintained that the annual Meetings of State Parties should not just take stock of treaty implementation, but should also serve the purpose of reinforcing the new international norm against any use or possession of antipersonnel mines by anyone. The ICBL has condemned, and we have called upon States Parties to condemn loudly and consistently those who choose to stay outside of the norm, particularly those who continue to use antipersonnel mines. In the past year, we have again been disappointed with the response to our call. Mine Ban Treaty States Parties have not condemned instances of use regularly or forcefully enough, and, to our knowledge, have taken few if any steps to penalize mine users, diplomatically or otherwise. This meeting, and the meetings related to the Convention on Conventional Weapons, are the prime opportunities for speaking out to stigmatize the use of this barbaric weapon.

We once again call for some sort of informal mechanism or process that will ensure a consistent and strong response to instances of use of antipersonnel mines by non-States Parties and by rebel groups.

In its latest reporting period, since May 2001, Landmine Monitor identified confirmed use of antipersonnel mines, or compelling evidence of use of antipersonnel mines, by nine governments. Most disturbingly, the massive new mine-laying operations by India and Pakistan likely mean that more mines went into the ground than in the previous reporting period. The ICBL has repeatedly condemned these operations, which have caused numerous civilian casualties, and we have called on India and Pakistan to stop laying mines. There was also extensive ongoing use of antipersonnel mines by the governments of Myanmar and Russia (in Chechnya), and lesser-scale ongoing use by Nepal and Somalia. In addition, despite a declared use moratorium in place since 1996, Georgian forces apparently laid antipersonnel mines in the reporting period.

In Afghanistan, there were reports of limited use of mines and booby-traps by Taliban and Al-Qaeda fighters, as well as the Northern Alliance. There were no instances of use of antipersonnel mines by the United States or coalition forces.

With regard to Mine Ban Treaty signatories, who are obligated under international law to no longer use antipersonnel mines, Landmine Monitor has continued to receive troubling accounts of ongoing use of antipersonnel mines inside Burundi by both government and rebel forces, and in the DR Congo by the Burundi Army. The government strongly denies these allegations and Landmine Monitor has been unable to establish the facts independently. We urge States Parties to respond to Burundi's invitation to send an observer mission. In Sudan, the signatory government and rebel forces have exchanged accusations of ongoing mine use, with denials by both sides.

Despite these instances and allegations of use, the trend is clearly toward widespread international rejection of any use or possession of antipersonnel mines. Indeed, one of the most encouraging findings of this year's *Landmine Monitor Report* is the cessation of mine use in key countries. The use by nine governments in this reporting period compares to use by at least 13 governments in the previous reporting period. Mine use has halted in several countries where it has been most widespread in recent years, including Angola (since the April 2002 peace agreement) and Sri Lanka (since a cease-fire in December 2001). Also, in contrast to the previous reporting period, Landmine Monitor has not recorded new mine use by the governments of DR Congo, Israel, and Kyrgyzstan.

Landmine Monitor found solid evidence of use of antipersonnel mines by non-state actors based in fourteen countries, compared to eighteen last year. As with the governments, rebel use stopped in 2002 in Angola and Sri Lanka. Moreover, unlike last year, Landmine Monitor received no new allegations of use by rebels in FYR Macedonia, Senegal, and Uganda.

Other Major Landmine Monitor Findings

I would now like to report to delegates some of the other major findings of this year's *Landmine Monitor Report*:

- More than 34 million antipersonnel mines have been destroyed by 61 states, including some 7 million in this reporting period. A total of 34 Mine Ban Treaty States Parties have completed destruction of their antipersonnel mine stockpiles, including four since the last MSP: Sweden, Albania, Yemen, and most recently, Nicaragua just last month. Another 21 States Parties are in the process of destroying their stocks.
- While the longer term trend is fewer new mine victims each year than in the past, reported new mine casualties remained constant in 2001. Landmine Monitor identified at least 7,987 new casualties to landmines and UXO in 2001, as compared to 8,064 in 2000. But, the lack of reliable reporting in some countries, and the underreporting of casualties

in many countries, must be accounted for, resulting in our estimate of 15,000-20,000 per year. The greatest number of reported new victims in this time period appear to be found in Afghanistan, Russia (Chechnya), Cambodia, Angola, Nepal, India, northern Iraq, and, likely, Burma. Significant numbers of new victims are also found in Colombia, DR Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and, likely, Vietnam.

- Mine action funding has totaled over \$1.4 billion in the past decade. However, global mine action funding stagnated in 2001—the first time since 1992 that a significant increase has not been registered. Landmine Monitor identified \$237 million in mine action funding in 2001, a decrease of about \$4 million from 2000. The US continued to be the largest donor in terms of total dollars, but its mine action funding fell by \$13 million. Of the 20 major donors, nine had increased mine action funding in 2001 and eleven had decreased funding.
- In this reporting period, some form of mine clearance was underway in 74 of 90 mine-affected countries. In 2001, new mine risk education programs were initiated in ten countries. The first Landmine Impact Survey was completed in July 2000; since then five others have been completed and seven more are underway or being planned.
- The number of antipersonnel mine producers has dropped from 55 to 14. Of the 14 countries still considered active producers by Landmine Monitor, at least three (Egypt, South Korea, and the U.S.) report no production in recent years.
- Global trade in antipersonnel mines has been reduced to a smattering of illicit or covert transactions since the mid-1990s. However, in a disturbing development, Iran, which ostensibly instituted an export moratorium on antipersonnel mines in 1997, has apparently provided mines to combatants in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Mine clearance organizations in Afghanistan are encountering many Iranian-manufactured antipersonnel mines dated 1999 and 2000.

A total of 115 Landmine Monitor researchers in 90 countries systematically collected and analyzed information from a wide variety of sources for this comprehensive report. Their names are listed at the beginning of the report. We would like to thank thirteen States Parties—Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom--as well as the European Commission, for funding the Landmine Monitor initiative this year.

The Monitor reflects our shared view that transparency and cooperation are essential elements to the successful elimination of antipersonnel mines, but also the recognition that there is a need for independent reporting and evaluation. We welcome comments, clarifications, and corrections from governments and others, in the spirit of dialogue and in the search for accurate and reliable information necessary to reach the goal of a mine-free world. It is our practice to include official responses to the Landmine Monitor from governments in the report itself, and to post them in their entirety on our web site.

Intersessional Work Program

The ICBL continues to believe that the intersessional work program is vitally important to ensuring progress in the work of the Mine Ban Treaty. We would like to express our general satisfaction with the work of the Standing Committees since the last Meeting of States Parties. We particularly appreciate the extensive role accorded to the ICBL. We believe this informal, inclusive, and cooperative approach has been key to the success of the Mine Ban Treaty, and must be continued.

We would like to note the important role played by the Implementation Support Unit since its establishment in January. It has contributed significantly to ensuring better preparations and follow-up, thereby enabling States Parties, the ICBL and others to better achieve concrete results.

The ICBL looks forward to working closely with the co-chairs and co-rapporteurs, and the ISU, during the coming year.

We will intervene on Wednesday and Thursday with our observations and concerns regarding the matters before each of the four Standing Committees, but would like to make a few remarks today.

Standing Committee on Victim Assistance

In reviewing the available information for the last five years, we are led to conclude that too few States Parties are adequately fulfilling the victim assistance provision of the Mine Ban Treaty, which requires that States in a position to do so “shall provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration of mine victims...”. A few governments have contributed generously, to be sure, and we thank them. But many governments clearly in a position to do so, are not contributing to victim assistance. We urge all donor governments to act on the language of the treaty. Progress on victim assistance will take two things: implementers that know what they're doing, and donors who accept the long-term nature of the business of building human services that are of a minimum level of quality and of a tolerable level of sustainability.

We again call on governments of mine-affected countries to set up a disability coordination body, to select a method of planning and follow through with it. Make sure the coordination body has representatives from the community of disabled persons and landmine victims. Make sure it leads to a plan of action, not only more actions to plan.

We still do not have enough information to give a truly comprehensive progress report on victim assistance. We again urge all donors and mine-affected countries to use Article 7 Form J to report on Victim Assistance. It will benefit the survivors who are still waiting for the promise of the Mine Ban Treaty to come true.

Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Awareness and Related Technologies

In the 2002 intersessional meetings, the ICBL drew the attention of States Parties to the capacity—or lack thereof—of mine-affected States Parties to meet the ten-year obligation to clear emplaced mines. An examination of clearance outputs over the past five years makes it quite evident that a number of States Parties will not be able to meet the Article 5 deadline, at least not at current levels of funding.

The ICBL has stressed that increased, flexible, long-term funding is needed. In this regard, we were encouraged by Norway's pledge at the Oslo conference last week to at least maintain funding over the next five years at a level similar to the past five years, and Norway's proposal on Monday to establish a resource mobilization contact group.

Aside from funding, other key needs include more information, and more appropriate information, for decision-making, priority setting and tasking in humanitarian mine clearance operations; this puts an emphasis on completion of Landmine Impact Surveys. National strategic mine action plans are also important. These plans should be linked to the treaty deadline, and should also be closely linked to broader development efforts in order to improve the socio-economic situation of mine-affected communities.

Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction

As noted already, the four-year deadline for stockpile destruction is approaching for many States Parties. It is essential to the credibility of the Mine Ban Treaty that all States Parties meet this legal obligation. This will require political will and may require increased technical and financial assistance from donors. States Parties should give high priority to this pillar of mine action, which we like to call preventive mine action, since every stockpiled mine destroyed is a life potentially saved. It is important that States Parties carefully track the progress and problems other States may be having meeting their deadline. States Parties should also consider what steps might be appropriate in the event someone fails to meet their stockpile destruction obligation.

Standing Committee on General Status and Operation of the Convention

With respect to issues being considered by the GSOC Standing Committee: First, we have been disappointed with slow progress regarding matters related to compliance and Article 8. Several years of discussions have resulted in little more than expression of a difference of opinion among States Parties on the need for new mechanisms to deal with compliance concerns, and no concrete steps to operationalize Article 8. There should be no higher priority for States Parties than dealing in a meaningful fashion with compliance issues.

Second, looming ever larger and more urgent are the Article 1 issues related to interpretation of “assist,” joint military operations with States that may use antipersonnel mines, and foreign transit and stockpiling of antipersonnel mines. The coalition fight in

Afghanistan heightened our long-standing concerns, and the possibility of a war on Iraq, where the U.S. used antipersonnel mines in 1991, raises them even further.

This is by no means a problem limited to possible operations with the United States. As already noted, there are significant questions regarding Tajikistan, and the use of antipersonnel mines by Russian forces stationed in Tajikistan. In addition, the ICBL is concerned about the position of Rwanda, whose forces cooperate closely with the RCD rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2002, RCD rebels admitted ongoing use of antipersonnel mines.

The ICBL believes that any type of assistance to or participation in joint operations with an armed force that is using antipersonnel mines is clearly against the spirit of the Mine Ban Treaty, and possibly a violation of Article 1 obligations. The ICBL calls on State Parties to insist that non-signatories do not use antipersonnel mines in joint operations, and to refuse to take part in any joint operations that involve use of antipersonnel mines.

With regard to interpretation of “assist,” full and effective implementation of the treaty will be enhanced if States Parties are clear and consistent with regard to what acts, if any, are permitted and what acts are prohibited. It appears that various States Parties may have significantly different understandings about what acts, if any, are permitted.

We note that the Standing Committee on General Status has recommended that further consultations be undertaken with a view to reaching a common understanding of the interpretation of Article 1C, and encourages States Parties to inform the Standing Committee of their national views and practices.

Third, we remain frustrated by the relatively few statements of fact or policy or legal interpretation regarding the issue of antivehicle mines with sensitive fuzes or antihandling devices. We appreciate the increased clarity offered by a number of States Parties, but too few have weighed in. In particular, only a very small number of States Parties have heeded the recommendation that came forth from the last meeting of States Parties that governments should review the antivehicle mines in their inventories to ensure the risk posed to civilians is minimized. Not enough work has been done to identify which antivehicle mines with what types of sensitive fuzes or antihandling devices are captured by the Mine Ban Treaty, or even to reach a common understanding regarding possible best practices regarding such mines of concern. The inconsistency and ambiguity of State practice on this issue undermines the integrity of the treaty.

We note that although this issue has been raised at every Meeting of States Parties and every intersessional meeting since entry into force, only five governments have publicly stated a position contrary to the dominant view that antivehicle mines with sensitive antihandling devices that can explode from an unintentional act of a person are banned by the treaty.

Fourth, we are pleased with the exchange of information in the GSOC Standing Committee about antipersonnel mines retained under Article 3 for training or

development purposes, and the common understanding, if not quite 100% consensus, that the number retained should be in the hundreds or thousands, but not tens of thousands. We are especially pleased that several States Parties have decided to reduce the number of mines they intend to retain. But, we have concerns about the number of mines retained by some States Parties. We have in the past questioned why Brazil needed to keep 17,000 mines, more than any other State Party at the time. In a new development, Chile stated in its very recent initial Article 7 Report that it intends to keep about 28,000 antipersonnel mines. This number is clearly out of line with that of other States Parties, and surely cannot be justified on the basis of training and development needs. The ICBL calls on Chile to revise this number downward as soon as possible. Likewise, we are concerned that Bangladesh in its recent initial Article 7 Report states it will keep 15,000 mines. We are also concerned about Zambia's decision to retain its entire stockpile of 6,691 antipersonnel mines, and to destroy none.

According to Article 7 reporting, for the most part, few of the mines being retained are being consumed (that is, expended or destroyed) each year. In fact, some States Parties retaining mines have not consumed a single mine in training or research activities since reporting started in 1999.

We note that several States Parties have responded to the ICBL's call to include in Article 7 reporting information regarding the intended purpose and actual use of mines retained for training or development, and we urge other States Parties to follow suit. The GSOC Standing Committee has also encouraged this. In this way, there will be greater clarity and consistency regarding appropriate and necessary requirements for retaining mines. The ICBL continues to question the need for live mines for training purposes, a position publicly shared by a number of States Parties.

Finally, with regard to national implementation measures, we note that while progress is being made, a disturbingly small number of states have passed domestic laws implementing the Mine Ban Treaty – 35 by our count, compared to 29 last year. Another 20 countries report that steps to enact legislation or other measures are underway. We urge all States Parties to pass legislation or adopt other legally binding measures that would impose penal sanctions for any potential future violations of the treaty, and would provide for full implementation of all aspects of the treaty. The ICBL supported the decision taken at the May 2002 intersessional meeting to expand the work of the Article 7 contact group to include efforts related to Article 9, and we will continue our work to encourage and facilitate the development and enactment of national legislation and other effective implementation measures.

Conclusion

In closing, we would like to thank the outgoing co-chairs of the Standing Committees for their excellent work and for cooperating so closely with the ICBL. We particularly thank Nicaragua for serving so ably as President. We are delighted that Belgium, the first country to enact a law banning antipersonnel mines, is now in the presidency, and we

very much look forward to working with Ambassador Lint, who has already made enormous contributions to our common cause of eradicating antipersonnel mines.

We can all be justifiably pleased with the accomplishments of the past five years. We have made great strides in fulfilling the hopes generated by the Ottawa Process and the Oslo negotiations, so widely praised as a “new diplomacy” characterized above all by the partnership between governments and NGOs, a “new diplomacy” carried out in non-traditional ways, and not dictated by so-called bigger powers.

But it should be clear to all that the challenges of the coming years are enormous: the challenges of universalizing the Mine Ban Treaty; of ensuring deadlines for stockpile destruction and mine clearance are met; of ensuring the needs of mine survivors are better met; the challenge of firmly establishing the new international norm so that no new antipersonnel mines are laid and we move toward our goal of no new mine victims.

Thank you.