



# United Nations

Press release

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## STATES PARTIES TO THE LANDMINES BAN TREATY

### TAKE THEIR MESSAGE TO ASIA

Geneva - States Parties to the Convention banning anti-personnel mines will meet in Asia for the first time ever when they convene their fifth annual meeting in Bangkok from September 15 to 19, 2003.

“Meeting in Thailand, a mine-affected country in one of the most mine-affected regions, will remind the world of our common goal in achieving a mine-free world, our dedication towards the goal and ongoing challenges we must overcome,” said Laxanachantorn Laohaphan, Ambassador of Thailand to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

“Recognizing both the human suffering caused by anti-personnel mines and the economic potential of mined areas, we will use this meeting to urge countries in Asia and in other regions to increase awareness of the humanitarian impact of anti-personnel mines and the benefits of joining the Convention,” said Ambassador Laxanachantorn.

Ambassador Laxanachantorn was joined in making her statements by Ambassador Jean Lint of Belgium, President of the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties. Ambassador Lint noted that the Bangkok meeting will also lay the foundation for preparations for the States Parties’ five-year review of the Convention, which will take place in late 2004.

“With the Bangkok meeting taking place just one year before the Convention’s First Review Conference, we will urge States to pursue, with renewed vigour, efforts to clear mined areas, assist victims, destroy stockpiled anti-personnel mines and promote universal adherence to this important instrument,” said Ambassador Lint.

More than 600 delegates representing approximately 130 States and dozens of international and non-governmental organizations are expected to attend the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties in Bangkok. The meeting will be opened by Her Royal Highness, Princess Galyani Vadhana Krom Luang Naradhiwas Rajanagarindra of Thailand and Her Royal Highness, Princess Astrid of Belgium, and will be presided over by Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai.

(more)

## **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 the Convention entered into force and as of September 8, 2003 136 States had ratified or acceded to it.

The week of September 15-19, 2003, States Parties to the Convention will hold their fifth annual meeting at the United Nations Conference Centre ("ESCAP" Building) in Bangkok. The States Parties will be joined by observer States and dozens of international and non-governmental organizations, including the Nobel Peace Prize laureate International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

Previous Meetings of the States Parties have been held in Maputo (1999), Geneva (2000), Managua (2001), and Geneva (2002).

Under the Presidency of Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai, the Meeting will extol the importance and benefits of the Convention to those States which have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention. In South East Asia, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Timor Leste have joined the Convention, while Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Singapore and Viet Nam have not yet done so.

The Meeting will be asked to take a series of decisions related to preparations for the Convention's First Review Conference. On the basis of consultations led by Ambassador Jean Lint of Belgium, President of the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties, it will be proposed that the First Review Conference take place in Nairobi in November 2004.

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