

**EIGHTH MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON  
THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND  
TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION  
18-22 November 2007, Dead Sea, Jordan**

**Statement by H.E. Jose P. Del Rosario, Jr.**  
Ambassador of the Philippines to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan  
and Head of the Philippine Delegation

**Your Royal Highness, Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al-Hussein,  
Fellow Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Philippine Delegation wishes to express its congratulations to Your Royal Highness for your Presidency of the Eighth Meeting of States Parties (MSP) to the Ottawa Convention.

We wish to also take this opportunity to laud your personal and professional leadership in mine activity and action, as manifested by your exemplary service as Chairman of the Jordanian National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation and as Governing Council Member of the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

We would also like to thank the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for hosting the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties and for its kind hospitality that speaks volumes of Jordan's invaluable contributions to world and regional peace and security. The venue of this Meeting, with the majestic and historic scenery of the Dead Sea, will certainly inspire a successful and productive outcome for the 8th MSP.

The Philippines strongly supports the impressive efforts made by both state parties and civil society to universalize the mine ban. The Philippine Government is particularly indebted to the vibrant and untiring efforts of our civil society in their advocacy of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Philippine Campaign to Ban Landmines (PCBL), led by Atty. Sol Santos, and its global partner, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), continue to play a leading and invaluable role in our country's mine ban and non-proliferation efforts. Geneva Call is also an important and active partner.

The Philippines also wishes to pay tribute to the work of the UN Conference on Disarmament Secretariat, the GICHD, the Geneva Forum, the Swiss Foundation for Demining (FSD), the Landmine Monitor, Non-Violence International and the other inter-governmental and NGO stalwarts of the mine ban community.

The Philippines continues to work towards the passage of a domestic enabling law for the Ottawa Convention. The Philippines has signed and acceded to the

important international disarmament and non-proliferation conventions. The finalization and enactment of implementing legislation for the Ottawa and other conventions, however, remain a challenge for the executive and legislative branches of the Philippine Government. This is, in fact, a predicament shared by many states in our region and the global community.

Draft legislation authored by members of our Philippine Congress, in collaboration with the PCBL, addresses issues not typically found in the laws of other states, such as anti-vehicle landmines, booby-traps, other explosive devices, and explosive remnants of war.

While there will be a significant focus in this forum of the efforts to secure accession to the Ottawa treaty by those states that have yet to accede, we should not forget that true universalization of the Mine Ban Treaty will only be achieved when those entities that operate outside of the control of States – such as armed non-state actors (or NSAs) – also stop using mines.

It is in relation to armed NSAs that civil society can have a very important role to play and we would particularly like to mention the innovative *Deed of Commitment* process pioneered by Atty Santos and furthered by Geneva Call and the PCBL that complements the Ottawa Treaty by allowing armed NSAs to commit to a mine ban.

I am pleased to mention that, in the Philippines, three armed groups have made such a commitment.

Beyond the humanitarian imperative, engagement with armed NSAs for such purposes can have real benefits to peace processes as it offers new channels for contact, collaboration and dialogue.

States Parties to the Convention should fully support efforts to obtain commitments from armed NSAs to ban the use of mines, in line with Action Point 7 of the Nairobi Action Plan. The Philippines would also like to remind fellow delegates that within the terms of the Treaty, this represents an important way of preventing prohibited activity by such groups, in line with Action Point 64.

A case in point is the current peace process with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Neither the Philippine Government nor the Front used landmines in the Southern Philippines, but unexploded ordnance (UXO) remains a real threat.

Hence, even while the peace negotiations with the MILF are ongoing, the Government of the Philippines stands committed to taking action to eradicate the threats posed by UXO.

In this respect, we are currently finalizing an agreement with the MILF to assess, survey, and clear affected areas of unexploded ordnance. This innovative project, facilitated by the PCBL, Geneva Call, and the FSD, will be implemented by teams nominated by the Philippine Government and MILF.

We anticipate that this joint project will not only remove UXO from affected areas, but also help to build confidence between representatives of the two parties at an operational level. Currently funding for this crucial endeavor has yet to be identified. We would therefore strongly urge donor governments to consider supporting the project.

While the Ottawa Convention is indeed an important process, we feel that the global community should take a wholistic approach to mines and related disarmament processes. Hence, the Philippine Government pledges not only to continue working to advance the universalization of the Ottawa Convention among fellow Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) members, but also other relevant regimes.

As a concluding point, the Philippines would like to again note the significant and indispensable contribution of Civil Society groups to the advancement of the mine ban agenda.

The Ottawa Convention has indeed significantly contributed to realizing a mine-free world, but much remains to be done. Your Royal Highness, we are confident that under your able leadership, and with the cooperation and goodwill of our fellow delegates assembled here by the Dead Sea, the Eighth Meeting of States Parties will make important strides forward in achieving the goal of a more peaceful and safer planet for us all.

Thank you and *Mabuhay!*