



**** Press Release ****

Nicaragua free of all known landmines, Central America now a mine-free region

Geneva, 22 June 2010 – Nicaragua has declared that it is free of antipersonnel mines. “After two decades of work, Nicaragua is proud to announce that we have completed clearance of all known anti-personnel mines in our territory, and that all contaminated areas have been deemed safe for normal activity. The last mine was removed and destroyed on 13 April 2010.”

The announcement was made in Geneva by the Nicaragua’s delegation, during a meeting of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, also known as the Ottawa Convention.

By complying with Article 5 of the Convention, Nicaragua has ensured that all of Central America is now a mine-free region.

“This is a major milestone. An entire region previously riddled with anti-personnel mines is safe again. We congratulate Nicaragua for completing its mine clearance operations. We must now focus on meeting the needs and guaranteeing the rights of the survivors, in Nicaragua, and elsewhere,” said Ambassador Susan Eckey of Norway, current President of the Convention.

More than 179,000 anti-personnel mines were destroyed during Nicaragua’s efforts to comply with the Convention’s mine clearance obligations. Nicaragua undertook the largest demining operation in Central America.

This is the first announcement of mine clearance completion by a country since the Convention’s 2009 world summit in Colombia where Albania, Greece, Rwanda and Zambia announced they had cleared all of their known mine fields.

Landmines in Nicaragua

Landmines, mostly anti-personnel mines, were planted during the conflict that formally ended in 1989. The Nicaraguan military started clearance of known mine fields that same year.

More than 135,600 mines were first registered although that number grew as demining began and previously unmarked fields were found. Anti-personnel mines were found in 16 out of 17 regions in the country, affecting rural communities and severely impoverished areas. Nicaragua continued its demining operations even after facing the severe devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch and most recently Hurricane Felix. There are more than 1,200 landmine survivors in Nicaragua.

The AP Mine Ban Convention

The AP Mine Ban Convention bans anti-personnel mines and requires states that join to destroy all existing stocks, clear all mined areas and assist the survivors.

Contact: Laila Rodriguez +41 78 683 4407 or ISU@gichd.org

AP Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit
c/o Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining

7bis, avenue de la Paix | P.O. Box 1300 | 1211 Geneva 1 | Switzerland | t. + 41 (0)22 906 16 38
f. + 41 (0)22 906 16 90 | isu@gichd.org | www.apminebanconvention.org