

## **Address by Minister Dion to High-Level Panel of Ottawa Convention Pledging Conference**

**What does it take to get to a mine-free world by 2025?**

**March 2, 2016 - Geneva, Switzerland**

### **Check against delivery**

For Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Government of Canada, if there is a treaty in which we firmly believe, it is the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, better known as the Ottawa Convention.

Allow me to say that as a Canadian and a member of the Canadian cabinet when the convention was adopted, I consider it a great source of pride that not only was this treaty developed in Ottawa, but that it was also led by Canadian diplomats under the leadership of my predecessor and former colleague, Lloyd Axworthy.

Also, I am proud that we played an important role in its creation, thanks to an investment of diplomatic efforts and around \$400 million in action against mines since the convention was adopted.

I want to talk to you about the reasons that led us to believe in this treaty, and I will explain why we believe it is time to breathe new life into the convention.

Canada has great confidence in this treaty for at least three reasons.

First, this was a new kind of treaty—one that dealt not only with the weapons themselves, but also with the needs of the victims, who are at the very heart of our concern. This was nothing less than revolutionary.

Second, this treaty was not only successfully negotiated in a short period, it entered into force more rapidly than any disarmament instrument before it, which is a testament to the humanitarian imperative that all member countries felt.

Third, we believe in this convention mainly because it works:

- No fewer than 162 countries are now states parties to the convention.
- The number of known direct victims has been reduced from more than 26,000 per year to fewer than 3,400.
- At least 39 states have ceased to produce these weapons.
- More than 48 million stockpiled mines have been destroyed.

- More than one billion square metres of land has been cleared or otherwise deemed free of mines and returned to productive use.

Without exaggeration, this convention is among the most successful disarmament treaties ever established.

But it would be a very grave error to rest on our laurels. And with that, I'd like to come to my second point: we need to inject new momentum into this convention if we want to reach the goal we have given ourselves of a world free of landmines by 2025.

There is still an enormous amount of work to do:

- First and foremost, there are still approximately 3,400 people who are victimized by these weapons every year—and that is 3,400 too many.
- Landmines, including improvised devices, are used in conflicts by non-state actors, by states that are not party to the convention and allegedly even by some states parties.
- Thirty-one states parties have yet to complete their mine-clearance obligations.
- These countries continue to have varying degrees of landmine contamination, resulting in various challenges and complexities.
- There are approximately 300,000-400,000 mine survivors worldwide, many of whom require ongoing care.

But maybe the most worrying concern of all is that there are more than 30 states that remain outside this treaty. And the reality is that we will never have a mine-free world while these states insist on retaining the option of producing and using these weapons.

If we are to reach our common goal of a world free of landmines by 2025, a lot needs to happen in a short time:

- We must show the political determination necessary to bring inside those states currently outside the treaty, and in doing so, to at last realize the universalization of the convention.
- All states parties must take responsibility for meeting their own treaty commitments, including mine clearance and the elimination of their stockpiles.
- We need to provide the necessary means to ensure this work is coordinated. If there is a body that is key in this regard, it is the Implementation Support Unit. Unfortunately, the unit has been under-resourced in recent years, which is why I'm pleased today to announce a Canadian contribution of \$130,000 to back the work of the Implementation Support Unit for the current year.

Finally, where mines are involved, mine action must always be a central part of the solution. Humanitarian actors need roads clear of mines to access people in dire need of aid.

Development projects cannot be built on mine-laden foundations. And societies cannot recover from conflict where people cannot return to their homes, fields and schools.

States with the means to do so must support mine-affected states and the awful legacy of these weapons by:

- clearing mines and destroying stockpiles;
- supporting mine-risk education; and
- providing support for victims and their families and communities.

Dear colleagues, I know that this agenda I have just described is demanding and ambitious. But if we need inspiration, we just have to think about the courage it takes for a person to rebuild his or her life after having lost a limb to a landmine. We need to find the same courage in our hearts in the name of all of these victims and all the victims there will be if we do not act.

I know we are able do this. Rest assured that you can count on Canada to work with each of you to realize our shared vision, the one at the core of the Ottawa Convention: a world free of landmines.