

Press Release



Anti-landmines movement marches closer to its goal

Geneva, 7 December 2012 – The Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties (12MSP) of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or Ottawa Convention, has concluded with significant steps having been taken towards the goal of a mine-free world. The five-day international gathering involving approximately 120 States featured a mid-term assessment of the *Cartagena Action Plan*, which guides the Convention’s universal adoption, mine-clearance, stockpile destruction and victim assistance efforts until 2014. This assessment was contained in the *Geneva Progress Report*, which the meeting finalised on its last day.

Universalizing acceptance of the Convention:

- The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of **Poland**, Maciej Spuznar, announced that Poland’s President had completed the Convention’s ratification process on 6 December 2012. Poland will become the 161st state to join the Convention once its ratification instrument is presented to the United Nations Secretary General. All European Union members are now bound by the Convention.
- The **United States** indicated that its landmine policy review is on-going and that it expects to be able to announce a decision soon. The **Lao PDR** reiterated it is working toward joining the Convention and has organised a review of its readiness to accede to the Convention. **Myanmar**, taking part in a formal meeting of the Convention for only the third time, indicated that its participation reflects its “keen interest in the present and future work of the Convention.”
- The **European Union** is taking a leading role in the universalization of the Convention by funding the work of His Royal Highness Prince Mired of Jordan and other members of a high level task force to engage the leaders of States not party to the Convention.

Clearing all mined areas:

- Six States Parties declared completion of their obligation to clear all mined areas under their jurisdiction or control: **Congo, Denmark, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Jordan** and **Uganda**. There are now 23 States Parties that have complied with this obligation, including 11 in Africa, 6 in Europe, 5 in Latin America and 1 in the Middle East. Thirty-six (36) States Parties are still in the process of clearing mined areas.
- **Hungary** confirmed that it will conclude mine clearance efforts in 2013. **Mozambique** and **Venezuela** reported that they aim to complete mine clearance by the time of their respective deadlines in 2014.
- Four States Parties requested and were granted extensions on their mine clearance deadlines: **Afghanistan, Angola, Cyprus** and **Zimbabwe** until 2023, 2018, 2016 and 2015 respectively.

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit

- **Somalia** participated for the first time as a State Party to the Convention, reporting on the humanitarian tragedy caused by anti-personnel mines in the country.

Assisting the victims:

- The link between the Convention's promise to assist landmine survivors and the relevant human rights framework was strengthened through the participation of UN Human Rights Commissioner Navanethem Pillay, who said, "There are at least four ways in which the **CRPD** is of particular relevance in the context of victim assistance under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention."
- "The situation for the majority of mine victims is significantly better today than it was a decade ago," said **Norway**. It further remarked that the reasons for the considerable decline in the number of new victims of anti-personnel mines over the past decade are simple: "The Convention works, States Parties comply with their obligations and States not party overwhelmingly respect its core obligations."

Destroying all stockpiled anti-personnel mines:

- According to the Geneva Progress Report, together the States Parties have destroyed over 44.5 million stockpiled mines.
- **Finland**, one of the newest States Parties, stated that "the destruction of Finland's stockpile commenced shortly after entry-into force" and that Finland will have destroyed its entire stock "by the end of 2015."
- **Greece** indicated that it would reinitiate the destruction process of remaining anti-personnel mines "as soon as possible" and that its stockpile destruction programme is now "back on track." Greece reported that it must still destroy approximately 953,000 stockpiled anti-personnel mines.
- **Ukraine** reported that a project to destroy 3 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines will commence "as early as January 2013." In total, Ukraine must still destroy more than 5.9 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines. **Belarus** also provided an update on its efforts to destroy more than 3.3 million mines. Both Belarus and Ukraine must destroy a particular type of mine – the Soviet-era "PFM-1" – which is extremely hazardous and poses serious technical difficulties.

The meeting's President, Ambassador Matjaz Kovacic of Slovenia, expressed satisfaction that the 12MSP had succeeded in fulfilling its purpose as a mid-term assessment of the *Cartagena Action Plan*.

The 12MSP closed with a decision to hold the Thirteen Meeting of the States Parties **again in Geneva** in 2013. In addition, the offer of **Mozambique** to host and preside over the Convention's Third Review Conference in 2014 was "noted with appreciation."

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