

**Cartagena Summit on a Mine Free World  
High Level Segment – Statement by CANADA**

*Delivered by the Honourable Peter Kent, Minister of State of  
Foreign Affairs (Americas)*

Thank you Madame President,

Vice President Santos, Your Royal Highnesses Princess Astrid and  
Prince Mired, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to address you on this very special occasion  
here in the magnificent city of Cartagena.

Canada, like others present today, is most grateful to Colombia for  
hosting the second Review Conference of the ***Convention on the  
Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of  
Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction*** – or the *Ottawa  
Convention*, as we affectionately refer to it.

We are grateful as well to Switzerland for its work as President  
over the course of the past year; and to Norway for presiding over  
this Summit and the work of States Parties throughout the coming  
year.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we know, landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive  
remnants of war pose grave danger to civilians, both during  
conflict and often for many decades after conflict has ended.

The tragic reality is that these weapons, in various forms, have killed and maimed innocent civilians for more than a century and continue to do so in almost 80 countries around the globe.

Unlike some in this hall today, most of us have not been directly touched by these weapons.

Nor have we faced the hardship of trying to survive when landmines, cluster munitions or other detritus of war prevent access to valuable land for farming, for commercial development or for housing;

--when they restrict access to drinking water or water for irrigation; or prevent the building of and access to schools and health centres;

Most of us have not directly experienced the limitations they impose on the simple freedom to go about one's life in reasonable safety and security.

It was this situation that, in the mid-1990s, states, international organizations and civil society pledged to address in a systematic and comprehensive way by establishing a legally binding instrument of substance and of quality;

--an instrument that would set the highest international standard in the fight against anti-personnel mines; and would contribute to strengthening international humanitarian law.

No one could have imagined in 1996, that such a Convention could be negotiated in one year, and that 122 States would be on hand to sign it, the day it opened for signature in Ottawa on December 3<sup>rd</sup> 1997.

And that today, a decade after its entry into force on March 1<sup>st</sup> 1999, there would be 156 States – more than 80% of the world's

nations would be party to it, and that even non-party States would respect its norms.

The value of this Convention lies, of course, not only in the number of states which have become party or otherwise subscribe to it.

It lies in the effectiveness of the partnership that we have forged among governments, UN agencies, international organizations and civil society, and our collective work that continues to deliver solid results each day.

Already, more than 42 million stockpiled mines have been destroyed;

---more than 3,200 square kilometres of land have been cleared in approximately 90 countries;

--- hundreds of thousands of survivors have been rehabilitated and re-integrated into their communities as full, productive members;

The value of this instrument lies in the solemn commitment that states parties throughout the world have made to ensure that all obligations are fulfilled and all of its provisions are realized.

It lies, most profoundly, in the thousands of lives and limbs that have been saved and that will be saved as a result of the work of people here and around the world who have dedicated themselves to ending the scourge of anti-personnel landmines.

Many of the same people and others, who, more recently, have taken similar action to protect civilians from the impact of cluster munitions.

Canada participated actively in the recent negotiation of the new *Convention on Cluster Munitions* and we were delighted to be among the 94 States to sign the Convention in Oslo one year ago today.

Canada believes the Ottawa Convention and the new Convention on Cluster Munitions are, in every respect, complementary and I urge states that have not yet done so to become party to both these remarkable instruments.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Canada will do its part to implement the Cartagena Action Plan that will guide the international mine action effort over the next five years.

In a few moments, it will be my great honour to sign the Cartagena Declaration. As we celebrate our success to date, we, in partnership with you, recommit ourselves to continuing to support mine action and all other activities necessary in order to protect innocent civilians from the ravages of war.

Thank you, Merci, Gracias.