

Statement by
The Honorable Sandra S. Pierantozzi
Minister of State, Republic of Palau
High Level Segment
Second Review Conference on the AP Mine Ban Treaty
3 December 2009, Cartagena, Colombia

Excellency Vice President of Colombia, Madame President, Your Royal Highnesses, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Madame President, having already spoken here before, I will endeavor to keep my remarks here short. It is an honor for me to represent Palau in signing the Cartagena Declaration and the Plan of Action in this beautiful Cartagena.

Many of us are here under sponsorships of many partners and we thank them all. We sincerely thank all donors and supporters for their contributions to this important cause. We also are mindful that some of us here are mere victims of conflicts for which we had no involvement, but this gives us the encouragement to support landmines ban to help rid the world of these devices that cause much suffering and affect many lives, and to make it possible for all to 'walk the earth in safety'.

The Republic of Palau is pleased that its paternal steward, the United States of America, for the first time since the inception of this Convention, has decided to send a Delegation to attend this Second Review Conference on the AP Mine Ban Convention.

The Republic of Palau welcomes the United States announcement that it is doing a review of its policy on landmines. This is a good sign of hope that the United States does care and is sensitive to the concerns of its friends and allies.

Although the United States has not acceded to this Treaty, the Republic of Palau takes this opportunity to thank the United States of America for its latest funding assistance to remove explosive remnants of war in Palau.

Palau hosted in May of last year a Universalization Workshop for the North Pacific. The Republic of Palau pledges to work in the coming months to convince its neighbors to accede to the Ottawa Convention.

And with that, Madame President, I will a happy holiday season and "Feliz Navidad" to all, and thank you, Colombia!