

Press Release



Thailand hosts three-day international symposium to enhance cooperation and assistance to and among mine-affected countries

Bangkok 24 June 2013 – Thailand is seeking to enhance assistance and cooperation among mine-affected countries at an international symposium in Bangkok from 23 to 25 June.

“It is an obligation of the 161 States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention to cooperate and assist each other in realizing its humanitarian goal of zero new victims and a mine-free world,” said Nopadol Gunavibool, Deputy Permanent Secretary of Thailand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “Thailand believes that building synergies will be the key to creating a sustainable solution for resource mobilization and international cooperation and assistance. I hope this will be a focus of our discussions during the next two days.”

“Cooperation and assistance is one of the pillars of our Convention,” added His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Al Hussein of Jordan, Special Envoy of the Convention, in a keynote address to the symposium. “More than 30 States Parties are still in the process of fulfilling their mine clearance obligation with the vast majority requiring external assistance to complete the work. As well, 28 States Parties are responsible for the well-being of significant number of landmine survivors. With numbers such as these, we need to strengthen national ownership and seek efficient and creative ways to implement mine clearance and assist landmine survivors.”

The needs and rights of landmine survivors are featuring prominently on the symposium’s agenda, with delegates examining synergies between cooperation and assistance under the Convention and regional efforts, such as the *Incheon Strategy* for persons with disabilities adopted in 2012.

The three-day *Bangkok Symposium on Cooperation and Assistance: Building Synergy towards Effective Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation* began on 23 June with a field visit to the Sirindhorn National Medical Rehabilitation Centre, which provides care for persons with disabilities including landmine survivors. The symposium also aims to better understand the true magnitude of the international efforts to assist landmine survivors including through aid granted for development.

More than 100 experts and diplomats representing over 35 states and 10 international and non-governmental organisations are taking part in the symposium sponsored by Australia and Thailand and supported by the Convention’s Implementation Support Unit (ISU).

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or Ottawa Convention, was adopted in Oslo in 1997, opened for signature in Ottawa the same year and entered into force on 1 March 1999. Since the Convention entered into force, 25 of 59 States Parties that have reported mined areas have declared completion of their mine clearance obligation; demining has resulted in millions of square meters of mine-contaminated land being released for social and economic activity.

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Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit