

# Press release



## Global landmine meeting ends with success stories and a recommitment

*Phnom Penh, 2 December 2011* – The global landmine meeting that gathered more than 1,000 delegates in Phnom Penh closed today marking impressive progress toward a mine-free world and with a strong recommitment to overcome remaining challenges.

“The Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties (11MSP) to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention has been a huge success,” said H.E. PRAK Sokhonn, Minister Attached to the Prime Minister of Cambodia and 11MSP President. “We drew strength from this movement’s past to make an equally strong commitment to the future. We remain focused on ending the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.”

In the 11MSP’s final report, the Convention’s 158 States Parties’ agreed “to recommit, even in difficult financial times, to realising a world without anti-personnel mines, where the rights of all are respected and where all women, girls, boys and men can live in dignity and prosperity.”

While global economic challenges weighed heavily on the minds of delegates, H.E. PRAK Sokhonn issued a strong appeal for the international community to honour its promise to support the Convention’s aims. “We agreed, without deadline or expiry date, to cooperation and assist one another in achieving the vision of this landmark humanitarian instrument,” said H.E. “While responsible governments must not turn their back on financial realities, equally we must not default on our obligations.”

Several States Parties to the Convention heeded the 11MSP President’s call.

- The Netherlands declared that “despite cuts in other areas, the government remains convinced of this matter” and reported that it intends to maintain its €15 million annual contribution to demining and victim assistance.
- Austria declared that “despite the overall financial crisis, we will have a slight increase in our specific mine action funding levels in 2012 to approximately €1.9 million.” Austria also reported its first ever contribution to demining and victim assistance in Cambodia, announcing contributions totaling €400,000.
- In addition, New Zealand announced that it will contribute more than US\$ 1 million in 2012 for a demining project in north-eastern Cambodia.

South-South cooperation was also top-of-mind for delegates.

- Brazil highlighted that it contributes approximately 46 percent of all resources for demining efforts carried out by the Organisation of American States.
- In addition, Ecuador and Peru announced that their partnership in demining common border areas will continue.

In addition to restating commitments to overcome future challenges, the 11MSP marked significant progress in the pursuit of the Convention’s core aims:

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- The 11MSP celebrated the fact that Tuvalu and South Sudan took their seats as the Convention's newest adherents.
- In addition, Finland's Minister of International Development announced that Finland is on the verge of becoming the 159<sup>th</sup> to join the Convention.
- Fifteen (15) States that have not yet joined the Convention attended the 11MSP as observers, signalling their openness to engage in a discussion on the devastating impact of anti-personnel mines.
- Amongst these, the USA reported that it is continuing to review its landmine policy and Myanmar indicated that "thorough study of the treaty will be continued."
- Turkey reported the destruction of all stockpiled anti-personnel mines with approximately 3 million mines having been destroyed.
- Burundi and Nigeria declared completion of their mine clearance obligations.
- In addition, Guinea Bissau, Jordan and Uganda announced that they will complete their demining programmes in coming months.
- More than 20 States Parties responsible for significant numbers of landmine survivors reported on efforts to respond to survivors' needs and to guarantee their rights. Cambodia, as one of the most affected countries, highlighted that it is assessing its national action plan on disability with a view to preparing a revised plan in 2012.

### **11MSP decisions**

On the 11MSP's last day, the meeting finalised the Phnom Penh Progress Report, a comprehensive stocktaking of progress in the pursuit of the Convention's aims in 2011. In addition, the 11MSP final expressed "deep concern about new use of anti-personnel mines" and requested that the UN Secretary General write to each State not party to the Convention "to strongly encourage these States to ratify or accede to the Convention.

The meeting granted requests to extend demining deadlines as follows:

- Algeria: The Meeting noted that Algeria's request for an extension until 1 April 2017, seemed "workable" given the technical challenges the country faces in three minefields.
- Chile has been granted an extension to 1 March 2020, with the States Parties confident that given Chile's enhanced process to release land, it could find itself "proceeding with implementation faster than that suggested."
- Congo (Brazzaville): The Meeting agreed with "regret" to grant the request for an extension until 1 January 2013. The Meeting, expressed "concern" for the late submission that was presented, by the Congo and that this had meant that from 1 November to 2 December 2011 the Congo had been non-compliant.
- Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Eritrea: The Meeting noted that, "while it may be unfortunate that after almost ten years since entry into force a State Party is unable to account for what remains to be done, it is positive that both states intend to take steps to understand the true extent of the challenge." The DRC's new deadline for demining was set for 1 January 2015; for Eritrea 1 February 2015.

A highlight to the 11MSP was a special session that commemorated two decades of efforts to eradicate mines and which featured the role of non-governmental organisations and landmine survivors who are now seen as "equal partners" by the Convention. Over 40 deminers, survivors, activists and representatives of states that helped create the movement took center stage. H.E. PRAK Sokhonn noted that the "first lesson of this movement provided was to look at the issue in a

different perspective. By putting a human face to it we made it clear to the world that this is not a military issue. This is a humanitarian issue.”

## **The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was adopted in Oslo in 1997, opened for signature in Ottawa the same year and entered into force in 1999.

To date 158 states have joined the Convention with 155 of these reporting that they no longer hold stocks of anti-personnel mines. Over 44.5 million stockpiled mines have been destroyed by the States Parties.

34 of 50 States that at one time manufactured anti-personnel mines are now bound by the Convention's ban on production. Most other parties have put in place moratoria on production and / or transfers of mines.

Demining has resulted in millions of square metres of once dangerous land being released for normal human activity.

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For interviews or more information regarding any aspect of the Convention kindly email: [ISU@APMineBanConvention.org](mailto:ISU@APMineBanConvention.org) or contact Laila Rodriguez at +855 97 6890 977 or +41 79 960 2274. Connect with the Convention through our [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) or [Twitter](#).