

# Press Release



## Progress in Implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

*Geneva, 4 December 2015* – The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention's Fourteenth Meeting of the States Parties (14MSP) concluded a week of work with major advances being recorded towards its goal of eradicating the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines, insisting that States with responsibility for landmine survivors integrate their care and rehabilitation into broader disability and human rights contexts, and for mine-affected States to steady their efforts to fulfill their mine clearance obligation.

The five-day international gathering at the United Nations in Geneva involved approximately 90 States Parties, 10 Observer states, including some that may hold millions of anti-personnel mines, and the participation of dozens of international and non-governmental organizations including landmine survivor networks.

Some of the week's highlights include:

### Clearing of all mined areas:

- **Mozambique** has given hope to other mine-affected States that fulfilment of the Convention's mine-clearance obligation is possible, after declaring that it has become the 29th State Party to declare it is now free of all known landmines [the 13th in Africa.]
- **Thirty (30) States Parties** are still in the process of clearing mined areas including five in South America, four in the European Union and 12 in Africa.
- The **Democratic Republic of the Congo** said if funding levels continue steadily, it could end its clearance efforts by 2017, four years ahead of its extended deadline.
- Among the States Parties that must still fulfil their mine clearance obligation are some of the most mine-affected in the world including Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Colombia and Iraq.
- Five States Parties requested and were granted extensions on their mine clearance deadlines. **(Press note: one-page information summaries can be sent to the media by request):**
  - **Cyprus**, which indicated that it does not have effective control over the areas in question, received an extension deadline until 1 July 2019;
  - **Ethiopia**, which missed its 1 June 2015 mine clearance deadline, was granted an extended deadline until 1 June 2020. Ethiopia will have to provide an updated work plan by April 2017.
  - **Mauritania** was granted an extension until 1 January 2021 to address its northern border. Mauritania will have to provide yearly updates starting in April 2016.
  - **Niger**: the States Parties have asked Niger to present a new mine clearance extension request by 31 March 2016, and granted a one year extension until 31 December 2016.

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit

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- **Senegal** was granted an extension until 1 March 2021. Senegal will have to provide an updated work plan by April 2017.

#### Destroying stockpiles:

- **Finland**, which became a State Party in 2012, declared having completed its obligation well ahead of its 2016 deadline. In total, Finland declared having destroyed 1,029,763 stockpiled mines, bringing Europe closer to destroying all stockpiled landmines.
- With Finland, now 157 of the 162 States Parties of the Convention no longer hold stocks; together these States Parties have destroyed over 47.5 million stockpiled landmines.
- **Oman** declared that it began destroying its stockpile in September 2015 and foresees meeting its Convention obligation within its deadline.
- **Poland**, with a 1 June 2017 deadline for destroying all stockpiled anti-personnel mines, indicated that over one million pieces have been destroyed, and that an additional 16,000 landmines that represent a particular danger to destroy have now been transferred to a destruction facility.
- **Belarus, Greece** and **Ukraine** – which have missed their deadlines for the destruction of their stockpiled anti-personnel mines – reported that their destruction efforts continue.
  - **Greece** reported that about 643,000 landmines remain. Greece's efforts were temporarily halted after a 1 October 2014 explosion at a destruction facility in Bulgaria killed 15 persons, but says it "will not waver from its commitment to fulfil its Convention's obligation."
  - **Belarus** informed that after a new landmine destruction facility opened in 2013 less than 1 million stockpiled landmines remain and that their obligation could be met by 1 November 2016. Belarus has benefited from support from the European Union and individual States Parties.
  - **Ukraine** indicated that it has destroyed over 1 million landmines and that 5,584,373 mines remain to be destroyed, including 5 million PFM-1 mines. It is currently receiving NATO support to destroy 3 million PFM-1; destruction costs are around 3 million Euros.
  - Both **Belarus** and **Ukraine** face particularly challenges in meeting their stockpile destruction deadline, as PFM-1 mines are extremely hazardous and pose serious technical difficulties to destroy.

#### Universal adoption of the Convention:

- **162 States** are part of the Convention including the majority of States that have been affected by landmines; all members of the European Union; every State in Sub-Saharan Africa, and every State in the Americas except for Cuba and the United States.
- **35 States** have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention. Combined, six of them – China, India, the Republic of Korea, Pakistan, Russia and the United States – may hold tens of millions of stockpiled antipersonnel mines.
- The following States not party to the Convention attended the 14MSP as Observers: China, India, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and the United States of America.
- **Sri Lanka**, a State not party to the treaty indicated that it is "seriously considering acceding to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, as a matter of priority. There are positive signs that the Government may decide to be a State Party within the course of next year."
- The **United States of America** said that since the Convention's previous meeting it had adopted policy to "not assist, encourage, or induce anyone outside the Korean Peninsula to engage in activity prohibited by the Ottawa Convention."
- The States Parties regretted that some armed non-State actors have made use of anti-personnel mines.

### Assisting the victims:

- H.R.H. Princess Astrid of Belgium and H.E. Didier Reynders, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium attended a special session with landmine survivors to discuss their challenges and needs for better and more effective into broader efforts related to human rights, health, education, employment and poverty reduction.
- UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Catalina Devandas Aguilar and Facundo Chávez Penillas, Human Rights and Disability Advisor, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, participated in the session.

### Next Presidency:

- The conference elected **Chile** as the next presidency of the Convention effective immediately.
- Chile will chair the Convention's Fifteenth Meeting of the States Parties (15MSP) from 28 November to 2 December 2016 in Chile. Not since 2009, had a meeting of the Convention taken place in Latin America.

### Others:

- Nearly 600 delegates took part in the Conference.
- The following eight States Parties will serve a two-year term as new Committee members:
  - Committee on Article 5 Implementation: Costa Rica and Zambia;
  - Committee on Cooperative Compliance: Sweden and Peru;
  - Committee on Victim Assistance: Colombia and Belgium;
  - Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance: Uganda and the Netherlands.

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

The Convention was the first disarmament instrument to take into account the needs of the victims of a particular weapon.

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For all communication and/or press-related questions please email the Convention's Implementation Support Unit: [isu\(at\)apminebanconvention.org](mailto:isu(at)apminebanconvention.org).