

Press Release



Global landmines meeting: Africa's engagement praised

Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 25 November 2011 – Africa's leadership in the fight against anti-personnel mines will be front and centre at next week's Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties (11MSP) of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or *Ottawa Convention*, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Several African states have committed to participate at a high level at what amounts to the world's largest gathering of anti-landmines diplomats and experts.

"I am grateful that so many African states will be represented at the 11MSP by Ministers or Deputy Ministers," said senior Cambodian Minister H.E. PRAK Sokhonn, who will preside over the 11MSP. "Like Cambodia, many of these states are also affected by landmines. Their ongoing high level interest in our common cause will help remind the world that our task is not yet complete."

Burundi's Minister of Public Security, Alain Guillaume Bunyoni, and Uganda's Minister of State for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, Musa Ecweru, will participate in the 11MSP. Both States have worked for over a decade to clear anti-personnel mines and are on the verge of being able to announce completion of their mine clearance obligations under the Convention.

Other African high level participants in the 11MSP include Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs from Mozambique and South Sudan and Guinea-Bissau's Deputy Minister of Defence. Mozambique, South Sudan and Guinea-Bissau are also continuing efforts to clear all areas containing anti-personnel mines and to assist landmine survivors.

"With a Meeting of the States Parties taking place in Cambodia, the anti-landmines movement is returning to one of its birthplaces," said H.E. PRAK Sokhonn. "We are well aware, though, that this movement also emerged from mine-affected communities in many African countries. We are united in a global effort to end the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines."

Almost every African state has joined the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, including the world's newest state, South Sudan, which made adherence to the Convention one of its first multilateral commitments. With 50 States Parties to the Convention in Africa, only Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Somalia remain outside this landmark humanitarian instrument. There is optimism that Libya could soon join the global anti-landmines movement given the April 2011 pledge by the Libyan National Transitional Council that it would not use landmines.

In addition to praising Africa for its commitment to the fight against anti-personnel mines, H.E. PRAK Sokhonn also lauded Finland for participating in the 11MSP at the Ministerial level. "The fact that Finland's Minister for International Development, Heidi Hautala, will join us in Phnom Penh is strong evidence of Finland's solidarity with mine-affected countries," said H.E. PRAK Sokhonn.

Finland is in the final stages of completing its internal process to accede to the Convention. In addition, Finland is a major supporter of demining around the world, having contributed over € 5.0 million to mine action in 2010, including over € 1.4 million to Cambodia

AP Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit

The 11MSP kicks off on 27 November in Phnom Penh with an opening ceremony featuring the Prime Minister of Cambodia, H.E. HUN Sen, and Helen CLARK, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The 11MSP will see over 1,000 delegates representing over 100 states dozens of international and non-governmental organisations descending on the Cambodian capital from 27 November to 2 December 2011.

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 153 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 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](#).