

## International Campaign to Ban Landmines

### Remarks to the United Nations First Committee (Disarmament and International Security)

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Delegates and Colleagues,

2009 marks ten years since the entry into force of the Mine Ban Treaty. It has proven to be a stellar example of the concrete benefits of humanitarian disarmament and of citizen diplomacy.

The Second Review Conference of the treaty will be held in Cartagena, Colombia beginning 29 November, and we encourage *all* states to come and participate. The Mine Ban Treaty is an open and inclusive process and all are welcome. Antipersonnel mines have now been so thoroughly stigmatized that it is time for the remaining 39 states not party to join. Doing so will bring great humanitarian and political benefit, with little to no cost in giving up an outmoded and outcast weapon. It is not too late to get on the right side of humanity and history.

Indeed, nearly all of those outside of the Mine Ban Treaty are in de facto compliance with most of its provisions. Only one state has laid significant numbers of mines in recent years—Myanmar. Virtually no state has traded in the weapon for more than a decade. Only a tiny number are still actively producing—notably India, Pakistan, and Myanmar.

Still, at least 30 states continue to cling to their aging stocks of antipersonnel mines and outdated military doctrine. These are weapons that should never be used, given the well-documented costs in civilian lives and limbs, and the long-term socio-economic harm. Moreover, these are weapons that are unlikely to ever be used, given the international condemnation that would follow.

So come to Cartagena, tell us of your plans to accede, and be welcomed into the family of those committed to protecting civilians both during and after armed conflict.

Another step is to support the annual UN General Assembly resolution calling for universalization and full implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty. Half of the states that have not yet joined the treaty nonetheless vote in favor of the resolution in order to demonstrate their support for the treaty's humanitarian objectives and their intention to join in the future. It is time for those who continue to abstain, to instead vote in favor, reflecting the nearly universal view that these weapons should at some point be eliminated from the face of the Earth.

Much work remains to be done to clear contaminated land, destroy remaining stockpiles, and provide adequate assistance to survivors and affected communities. But, there is no question about the great success of the Mine Ban Treaty over a decade of implementation. Use, production and trade of the weapon have almost stopped completely, more than 44 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines have been destroyed, large tracts of land have been cleared with many states declaring themselves mine-free, and the number of new victims each year has dropped dramatically.

This success has been due to the focus on humanitarian priorities and the realities from the field. It has been due to the lasting partnership forged among governments, NGOs under the ICBL banner, the ICRC, and UN agencies. It has been due to bold leadership and the willingness to avoid the tyranny of consensus rules and to sometimes engage in non-traditional diplomacy.

In a year in which the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to US President Barack Obama for a new direction in international diplomacy, it is worth remembering that the International Campaign to Ban Landmines received the Prize in 1997 not just for its essential contribution in bringing about the Mine Ban Treaty, but also for spearheading a new diplomacy in which citizens play a key role.

This model of diplomacy was also seen in the International Criminal Court and Child Soldiers campaigns, and most notably in the effort that resulted in the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. It is one that should carry forth in the other crucial humanitarian disarmament issues facing us today.

Thank you.