

Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, Cartagena de Indias, 30 November – 4 December 2009

**Statement by the Hon Georgina te Heuheu
Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control, New Zealand**

Madame President,

It is a pleasure to see you presiding over the Second Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. Your good work this week is yet another demonstration of Norway's strong leadership in this area.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Colombia for hosting this important Summit and for the warm welcome I and my delegation have received.

As a mine-affected country, and one that continues to face the terrible impact of landmines, it is appropriate that Colombia is the venue for this stock-take of the Ottawa Convention, ten years after its entry into force.

The Convention remains a partnership: a partnership not only between affected and non-affected countries, but also between governments and civil society – both in terms of the creation of the Convention as well as in its implementation.

Considerable progress has been made in meeting the Convention's objectives over the past decade. Use of landmines at a state level has all but ceased and only a limited number of countries are still producing these weapons. Use by non-state actor groups, an issue of considerable significance here in Colombia and a matter of ongoing concern to us all, has also decreased. I agree with those calls for a greater focus on this issue.

Admirable progress has been made on stockpile destruction and mine clearance. More than 42 million anti-personnel mines have been destroyed from stockpiles – this is more than ten landmines for every person in New Zealand. Over 1,000 square kilometres of mined land (involving more than 2 million anti-personnel mines) has been cleared.

New Zealand has been playing its part in this effort. We have a proud history in mine action, through our international development funding and the good work of our defence forces.

Each year we contribute to various multilateral agencies that are involved directly or indirectly with mine action. In particular we give NZ\$1 million annually

to the UN Mine Action Service in untagged funding for its work on mine clearance, risk education and victim assistance.

We acknowledge the essential role that mine action can play in strengthening broader development objectives.

One example of this is our partnership with the Mine Action Group (MAG) and UNESCO in the Lao PDR. Here New Zealand has helped clear seven of the main sites at the renowned 'Plain of Jars' site helping to safeguard the heritage landscape and ensuring the safety of surrounding communities and visitors to the site.

Clearing these historic sites is allowing for important tourism related development opportunities, plus clearance of 1,500 UXO items from villages close to the site and release of some 143,000 square metres of agricultural land.

This operation represents an excellent example of how clearance operations connect to development opportunities.

We continue to support mine action work in other areas. We have funded capability strengthening projects in South-East Asia, for example through the Cambodian Mine Action Centre. More recently New Zealand funded UNDP to deliver assistance and prosthetic limbs to a significant number of Egyptian landmine victims.

New Zealand has also provided in-kind support, including through secondments from our Defence force to the UN Mine Action Service office in New York and the provision of clearance teams.

Since the 1990s the New Zealand Defence Force has been deployed to clearance efforts in places like Lebanon, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Laos and Mozambique. Our teams have given New Zealanders firsthand experience of the horrible cost paid by the victims of landmines.

The tragic situation of victims of landmines should not be overlooked. I pay tribute to the many landmine survivors who are here today and who remind us of the urgency of our work. Beyond our development assistance, New Zealand has played its own role in this area, as previous Co-Chair and Co-Rapporteur of the Victim Assistance Committee. I am pleased then that the Cartagena Summit has placed victim assistance at the forefront of deliberations. A concerted effort is needed to ensure that all victims have access to all the services they need – whether medical or socio-economic – and that victims are involved in the decision-making process.

We must work to universalise the Convention and its norms. Together we have been successful in stigmatising the production or use of landmines – but universalisation of the Convention must remain our ultimate goal.

I have been proud of the progress made by our Pacific neighbours on this front. Vanuatu, the Cook Islands and recently Palau have all become new States Parties since our 2004 meeting. I specifically acknowledge the Minister of State from Palau who has journeyed a long way to be here today. Attracting new member states is vitally important to sustain momentum and build on the existing normative value of the Convention. We urge those countries yet to join the Convention to do so without delay.

Madame President,

Despite the excellent progress of the past decade in addressing the humanitarian impact of landmines our work is not done. As the last few days have shown there are still many areas to clear, stockpiles to destroy and victims to provide for. Steps need to be urgently taken to address the problems that still remain. The Cartagena Action Plan provides a blueprint for action over the next 5 years to move forward on the vision that was cemented with the Ottawa Convention's entry into force. It provides the basis for us to renew our resolve to achieve the full implementation of the Convention.

On this, states do not act alone. We continue to benefit from our active partnership, to which I referred earlier, with civil society. I would like to commend the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, including its active New Zealand branch, together with the International Committee of the Red Cross and other important civil society groups for your tireless work in keeping landmines on the international agenda and for your work on the ground.

If, collectively, we can redouble our efforts and implement the Cartagena Action Plan there will be cause for yet greater satisfaction at the third Review Conference of the Landmines Convention in 2014.

Thank you.