

**Second Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,
Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction /
Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World**

Cartagena, Colombia, 3 December 2009

Statement by

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United Nations

(opening)

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to have been invited to speak here. On behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations I wish to congratulate the President of the Review Conference, the Secretary-General of the Conference, the Colombian Government, and States Parties and non-State Parties participating as observers, international organizations and civil society, for their joint efforts in making this Review Conference a success.

(background/achievements)

It was ten years ago that the landmark Mine Ban Convention went into effect. This Convention signaled a new chapter in international humanitarian law, disarmament and non-proliferation. Its roots in civil society are retained in the Treaty in an unprecedented, innovative way. And it is a prime example of how a shared sense of conviction and political will can translate into concrete measures that save lives and livelihoods. Over the past decade, this Convention has illustrated so well what the great humanitarian Eleanor Roosevelt once said: "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams".

The progress achieved in the first full decade indeed has been nothing but remarkable. The production of anti-personnel mines has virtually stopped, their deployment and use drastically reduced. More than 40 million stockpiled mines have been destroyed, and assistance has been provided to survivors and populations living in the affected areas. Vast numbers of mined and suspected hazardous areas have been declared free of landmines and released for productive use. As a result of these achievements in the efforts to eliminate anti-personnel landmines, the number of casualties has sharply declined, our most central common goal. In some affected countries, casualties have dropped to almost zero. Other welcome trends include: increases in national capacity to manage complex mine action programmes; the great progress in framing victim assistance in the wider context of disability; and the development of improved risk-reduction tools. The Mine Ban Convention has been a central framework for States in conducting mine action activities that led to all these remarkable achievements.

(Challenges)

Nevertheless, if we are to truly fulfil all the goals of the Convention and create a world free of anti-personnel landmines, many challenges remain. There are still some 14 million stockpiled mines awaiting destruction, huge tracts of land are still infested or suspected of mine contamination and are too dangerous for productive use, and tens of thousands of victims and their families have not yet received adequate support. The presence of mines continues to impede social and economic development. In addition, as it became clear at last year's Meeting of States parties, many States lag behind in their obligations under the Convention for stockpile destruction and clearance. And some States remain outside of the framework so our continued advocacy for the Convention is required.

(Review conference)

Therefore, the work of this Review Conference is crucial. It provides the opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved in the last five years in terms of implementing the Nairobi Action Plan of 2004. It also provides a forum to discuss the remaining challenges, and to agree on ways ahead for the next five years.

(UN activities)

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations system has been an active partner in implementing this Convention combating the scourge of anti-personnel landmines. The United Nations Mine Action Team, combining the efforts of 14 United Nations partners, many of them represented in this Conference, is working in support of Member States' efforts to reduce death and injury from landmines. United Nations mine action assistance, partnership, and support through the Mine Action Team over the last years has reached more than 60 affected countries and territories.

The activities of the UN Mine Action Team have been guided by its Mine Action Strategy 2006-2010, which seeks to achieve concrete, measurable results in the four strategic areas of casualty reduction, land clearance and release, integration of mine action needs into national development plans, and assistance in the development of national capacities. To measure the progress made so far, the United Nations is undertaking a comprehensive review of the strategy and the progress being made to achieve these ambitious objectives, including through a field survey conducted during the past summer. We have made tangible progress in all of the four strategic areas, but challenges remain and the review is providing important guidance on how to strengthen our efforts. It will lead to a new United Nations mine action strategy that covers the period from 2011 to 2015, and should be fully consistent with the Cartagena Action Plan.

(Related successes)

As the saying goes, "success breeds success". The remarkable accomplishments of this Mine Ban Convention – in bringing about synergy between Governments and civil societies, in stigmatizing once-ubiquitous weapons, and in making tangible progress in the field and in the livelihood of people – have inspired other recent multilateral successes, including the protocol on explosive remnants of war under the CCW treaty, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Convention on Cluster Munitions adopted in Dublin last year. I wish to call on those States who have not yet done so, to adhere to the CCW protocol on explosive remnants of war, and to adopt the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as the Convention on Cluster Munitions. By doing so, your State will help to reduce drastically the suffering of future generations from inhumane explosive remnants of war, and ensure that

adequate care and support are provided to victims and their families to facilitate their full recovery and integration into society.

(Welcome the draft Outcome documents)

Let me close the circle by returning to the Treaty for which we have gathered here. The United Nations welcomes the adoption of a strong outcome document of this Conference. We call on all States to implement the Cartagena Action Plan faithfully, and to work in close partnership with civil society to that end. And we wish to stress that the United Nations system stands ready to provide any assistance necessary to implement this Action Plan.

Thank you.