

Pres Designate 2RC
Susan Eckey

**Third Continental Conference of African Experts on Landmines, Pretoria, 9 – 11
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**Statement by Ambassador Susan Eckey, President Designate of the Second Review
Conference of the Mine Ban Convention**

Excellencies, dear colleagues and friends of the Mine Ban Convention,

It is an honour for me to address this body of landmine experts and practitioners. Your dedication and hard work has moved the implementation of the Mine Ban Convention forward. You make a difference! I would also like to commend the AU and our hosts South-Africa for organising this meeting, and the ISU and the EU for supporting it.

Africa is and has been key to the realisation of Mine Ban Convention. You have changed and continue to change the lives of persons and communities affected by landmines. Many of us have heard of the Oslo Diplomatic Conference – and some here maybe even have been there – where the South African chair so ably managed the tough negotiations that brought about the Convention. Both before and after the adoption in Oslo, African practitioners and diplomats have continued to play key roles in the life of the Convention. It is my conviction that you will keep up the good work on the road to Cartagena and beyond – at least that's what I have heard yesterday and today! The Mine Ban Convention community needs strong African involvement because of your experience and because antipersonnel landmines still affect women and girls, boys and men on the continent.

Yesterday we heard speakers remind us that landmines continue to be an obstacle to development and the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals, in addition to causing humanitarian suffering and despair. UNDP has informed us that armed violence, including explosive remnants of war and small arms, is one of the major obstacles to development and the realisation of all human rights for all. That is why international humanitarian law, such as treaties on humanitarian disarmament such as the Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, must be fully implemented. By complying with the legal obligations and respecting the international norms of such instruments, we will be closer to protecting all civilians and giving them the care and support they need.

The Mine Ban Convention is in many ways the "mother" of the development of modern, international humanitarian law and humanitarian disarmament instruments. The unique partnership among states from different regions, and between states and the UN's field based organisations, the ICRC and civil society continues to be a hallmark of the landmine efforts and continues to bring results that would otherwise not have been achieved. At the Cartagena Summit on a Mine Free World, the Mine Ban Convention's second review conference, the Convention's

pioneer role and the extended and results oriented partnerships must be our points of departure. A Mine Free World is, as the motto says: "A shared commitment"!

So – what do we want to achieve in Cartagena? We want to get the world's attention to the continued challenges caused by anti-personnel landmines. We need to reaffirm and recommit to the humanitarian nature of the Mine Ban Convention. We need to commit to appropriate and timely action for survivors, victims and their families and communities. The highest international standards should give us guidance. We need to include a gender perspective in all mine action. We need to commit to continued cooperation and assistance, inter alia by looking at new approaches. And we need to confirm our commitment to comply fully with the Convention. Article 5 compliance on mine clearance and article 4 compliance on stock pile destruction are key to this.

A review document, and action plan and a political declaration will be adopted in Cartagena. Last week we had our second preparatory meeting of the review conference where we received comments and proposals to the first draft of these documents. We asked delegations that proposals be sent the ISU or the Norwegian delegation at the latest Monday, 14 September. The draft documents are found on the Convention web-site. In Cartagena, we will have three days of substantive discussions before we have a high level segment on Thursday and Friday, 3 – 4 December. This means that we need to complete our work in three days instead of the usual five at meetings of states parties. On the other hand, all delegations may take the floor during the high level segment by giving general statements of no longer than six (6) minutes. I also wish to remind you that a sponsorship programme is in place, so please contact the ISU for further detail. I know that our host country, Colombia, is making every effort for us to work as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Dear colleagues, I hope I have succeeded in conveying what we agreed to during the two preparatory meetings on the road to Cartagena. I look forward to continue to work with all of you. Thank you very much for your support so far! I am sure that our joint efforts will make the Mine Ban Convention the living instrument we need also in the future.

Thank you very much.