

ICBL EXPECTATIONS FOR THE SECOND REVIEW CONFERENCE
The Tirana Workshop on Achieving a Mine-Free Southeastern Europe
9 October 2009



The Review Conference is a special moment in the life of the Mine Ban Treaty, a moment that we must seize and take advantage of. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines sees the Review Conference as a critical opportunity to assess if the treaty is delivering on its promise to mine-affected communities and to elaborate concretely how to address the many issues still preventing fulfilment of this promise. It is a time to revitalize and reinvigorate our work on the treaty, and to recommit for the long run. We need to make sure that the road to Cartagena does not end there, but rather lays a solid foundation for the continuing path to a mine-free world.

With this in mind, the ICBL wrote to all States Parties this summer asking them to show their continued commitment to the Mine Ban Treaty in several ways. First, we repeated Colombia and Norway's call on States Parties to participate in the Cartagena Summit at the highest possible level. We are pleased to note that several States Parties have indeed announced that they will attend at the ministerial level, plus at least two heads of government. We also encouraged States Parties to adopt at the Review Conference a review that takes careful note of past progress and outstanding challenges in achieving the convention's objectives, a clear action plan to guide States Parties efforts for the next five years, and a political declaration making it clear that landmines will remain high on States Parties' agendas for the foreseeable future. Norway has already produced excellent drafts of such documents, and several proposals were made for strengthening them even further at the 2nd Preparatory Meeting in early September.

We also called on States Parties to come to Cartagena prepared to make two important statements: first, to announce that they have recently completed or reached a significant milestone in implementing treaty provisions, such as completion of obligations under Article 5 of the treaty as Albania will do or a new plan of action for victim assistance, and second, to make a concrete pledge of future actions, such as developing a multi-year budget for mine action or adopting national implementation measures by a certain date. Obviously being able to announce such progress or targets by the Review Conference may require extra effort by States Parties, but given the special significance of this year, we are hoping states would go this extra mile.

In addition to showcasing states' specific accomplishments and goals, we hope the Review Conference will address the key challenges facing the convention, which I will now briefly describe. First, the second Review Conference will rightly focus on the humanitarian nature of the Mine Ban Treaty, but in the current context it will also need to highlight its disarmament goal. The treaty's generally excellent record on compliance with the disarmament provisions was tainted last year when three States Parties failed to meet their stockpile destruction deadline. The ICBL has urged two of the three non-compliant states – Greece and Turkey – to finish destroying their millions of mines before this date. They now seem unable to live up to this challenge, but at the very least they should be able to put forward a target end date, which we hope is in early 2010.

We will also be looking closely at States Parties' practices on mines retained for training and development under Article 3. As we said yesterday, we expect States Parties to regularly review the

number of mines and to destroy any over the minimum number found strictly necessary. We hope there will be announcements in Cartagena, as there have been in past years, of sharp reductions in numbers of retained mines, preferably down to zero. We also hope to continue hearing about past and planned use of such mines to demonstrate that they are not de facto stockpiles.

Turning to mine clearance, after the disappointingly large number of extension requests submitted last year, we feel it is necessary at the Review Conference to recall the treaty's obligation to clear all mined areas "as soon as possible" since of course the longer mines remain in the ground, the longer innocent people are at risk of having their lives shattered by them. We hope to see in the future a much reduced proportion of mine-affected states seeking extensions and that such extensions be only for the minimum number of years strictly necessary. This will depend on continuing high levels of international and national contributions, as well as the increased use of efficient practices such as technical and non-technical surveys to release land when appropriate.

At Review Conference, States Parties should also take stock of lessons learned about risk education to recommend the best way to prevent future mine injuries. We would also like to see the Review Conference take note of the usefulness, as well as the potential drawbacks, of mainstreaming mine action and victim assistance funding into development. As was seen yesterday, measuring how much donors are still contributing to mine action through mainstreamed budgets is one of several challenges associated with this funding approach.

The Review Conference's review of progress will be most crucial – but most challenging – when it comes to Victim Assistance. States Parties with significant numbers of landmine victims have been working for several years on developing concrete and achievable victim assistance goals and plans to meet them, but both developing such plans and implementing them has proven more difficult than anticipated. We encourage those states with to arrive in Cartagena with a concrete, sustainable plan of action that can really make a difference to landmine survivors, their families and affected communities. Such a plan should be part of an overall disability strategy so as to avoid duplication of services and discrimination among different categories of disabled persons, as well as to ensure sustainability. The plan should focus on eliminating economic, physical, cultural, and geographic barriers so that landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities can access necessary services on an equal basis with others. And in all elements of victim assistance – from planning to implementing to evaluating victim assistance programs – we repeat our call to include landmine survivors and their representative organizations.

We will now turn to the other areas that the Nairobi Action Plan called "essential for achieving the Convention's aim," beginning with international cooperation and assistance, which is a treaty obligation for all States Parties "in a position to do so." Even non-typical donors may be in position to provide some form of assistance, such as sharing of national expertise. National contributions are of course essential, but many states will not be able to meet their stockpile destruction, mine clearance and victim assistance duties without international assistance. The ICBL therefore strongly encourages all states to go to Cartagena with *new multi-year commitments* of cooperation and assistance, be they financial, technical, or in-kind support.

On transparency and national implementation measures, we would like to see a much higher rate for the submissions of 2008 annual reports than we have seen in recent years (it now stands at only around

60%), plus a 100% target for initial reports, which should be possible with only two reports outstanding. We would also like to see several more states adopt national implementation measures by the Review Conference. As we heard yesterday, 67 States Parties still need to take this step to ensure that no individual may produce, acquire, stock, transfer or use antipersonnel mines, and if they do, they will be punished.

We should all make a special effort to convince states not yet party to the treaty to join by the Review Conference. We hope that 2009 will not mark the second year in a row with no new States Parties. We should also encourage all states that will need additional time to join to adopt interim measures, such as respecting the core provisions of the treaty, including not only a ban on the weapon, but also destruction of existing stockpiles, clearance of contaminated areas, and provision of victim assistance. The Review Conference should make it clear that the norm against the use of landmines is now universal. We hope that through our collective efforts we soon see an end to any use of antipersonnel mines by states and non-state armed groups alike and that we identify ways to clear areas even in areas still in conflict.

Finally, we believe that the Review Conference should explore where the treaty would benefit from building synergies with new related instruments – instruments that were built in part on the Mine Ban Convention experience – such as the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and to some extent the Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities.

I would like to end by bringing us back to the beginning – the first words of the convention in which states parties state their determination “to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.” Ultimately, a successful Review Conference will be one in which this goal is at the center of all our discussions on evaluating progress and setting out future work. Pursuing this objective – which ultimately means the Mine Ban Treaty is universally adhered to and implemented – will be a long and arduous task. But the ICBL strongly believes that with enough hard work, resources and creativity, it is “Mission Possible.”

Thank you.