

World Leaders Call for Full Support of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and for More Nations to Join the Efforts Towards a Mine-Free World

Colombia, Norway, Switzerland and civil society representatives called today upon world leaders to fully support the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and to rally behind the goal of a mine-free world. The call for action was made during a meeting at the United Nations in New York. The meeting is one of the events leading up to The Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World the name given to the Second Review Conference of the Convention.

?We all are determined to promote full implementation and universalisation of the Convention. I hope more States will join this year and thus get closer to our goal of a mine-free world,? said Swiss Ambassador Jürg Streuli, current President of the Convention.

During the meeting it was noted how anti-personnel mines continue to be used in conflicts around the world causing human suffering and impeding post-conflict development.

Switzerland has formally requested, through a UN Resolution, that States not parties to the Convention voluntarily provide information to make global mine action efforts more effective.

?We must send a strong signal at The Cartagena Summit to prove that we are on the way towards ridding the world of the scourge of landmines.?

Although much progress has been made through the AP Mine Ban Convention, many challenges remain. Some countries that have not yet joined the Convention, such as China, India, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia and the United States, may

have large stockpiles of landmines.

"It is a time for those yet to join to get on the right side of history and humanity," said Steve Goose, Arms Division Director at Human Rights Watch. "Civil society views The Cartagena Summit as a key moment in the life of the AP Mine Ban Convention. It is a time when all States Parties should reinvigorate their commitment to eradicate all anti-personnel mines - those in the ground and those in stocks - from the face of the earth."

Goose made the statement as head of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) delegation, a network of more than 1,200 non-governmental organizations in over 70 countries, and a 1997 Nobel Peace Prize co-laureate for its work on behalf of a mine-free world.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

The AP Mine Ban Convention seeks to eradicate the use of landmines and to end the suffering caused to victims. States that join are required to never use landmines again and to provide assistance to the survivors. 156 States are party to the Convention. Over 1,000 participants including heads of States and Governments are expected to attend the Summit in Colombia.

Delegations will review the work that the 156 nations have done to eradicate the use of landmines and to help the survivors. A new Cartagena Action Plan is expected to address the challenges that remain in clearing minefields across the world and in assisting the survivors.