



Landmine treaty meeting concludes with advances in stockpile destruction 158 countries no longer hold anti-personnel mines

Santiago, December 2016 – The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention's Fifteenth Meeting of the States Parties (15MSP) has concluded a week of work in Santiago, Chile, recording success in stockpile destruction with Poland announcing it had destroyed one million stockpiled landmines **bringing to 158 the number of States that no longer hold stocks. With Poland's stockpile destruction, the States Parties have now destroyed more than 49 million landmines.**

The international gathering involved more than 400 participants representing over 100 delegations including nine from States not party, some of which may hold millions of anti-personnel mines. The Conference expressed concern for the ever growing use of improvised landmines which has contributed to an increase in casualties, and called for sustained assistance to victims of these weapons.

This was the third time that the Convention met in Latin America, and the first one in the Southern Cone. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Marta Maurás, Ambassador of Chile to the UN in Geneva. The Ambassador, who also led the work of the Convention for the past year, hailed the meeting a “success” and said the treaty is still “a leading disarmament and humanitarian Convention”.

The Secretary General of the Meeting, Julio Bravo, Director of the Human Security Division of the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said Chile “was fully committed to meeting the 2020 deadline” to clear its remaining mined areas located in border areas.

The body of the Convention congratulated Chile for its work during the past year, for successfully leading the 15MSP and fully implementing the Convention.

Some of the week's highlights include,

Clearing of all mined areas

- **Thirty-two (32) States Parties** are still in the process of clearing mined areas including five in Latin America: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.
- Several States Parties have seen their contamination grow due to improvised explosive devices.
- Among the States Parties that must still fulfil their mine clearance obligation are some of the most mine-affected in the world including Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Colombia and Iraq; some of these countries will require additional technical and financial support if they are to meet the 2025 mine clearance ambition set by the States Parties in 2014.
- The Conference expressed concern that **Ukraine** is now in a state of non-compliance and called on Ukraine to submit a request for extension of its mine clearance deadline as soon as possible.
- Three States Parties requested and were granted extensions on their mine clearance deadlines,
 - **Ecuador**, which indicated that due to the earthquake that affected the country earlier in 2016 would be unable to meet its 1 October 2017 deadline, was granted a new deadline until 31 December 2017. Ecuador will have to submit a detailed request for extension which includes a mine clearance plan by 31 March 2017;

- **Niger**, was granted an extension until 31 December 2020, and will have to provide by 30 April 2017, a revised work plan containing a list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines as well as concrete milestones towards completion of its objectives.
- **Peru**, with a deadline until 1 March 2017, is carrying out joint operations with Ecuador to demine their common border. Peru received new information from Ecuador of the existence of 138 mined areas in the Cordillera del Condor. Due to this previously unknown contamination, Peru said it would be unable to meet its deadline. Peru was granted a new deadline until 31 December 2024 and will have to provide an updated work plan by 30 April 2018.

All States were asked to report on progress in implementation in accordance with their transparency reporting obligations under the Convention.

Victim Assistance

- States Parties with a significant number of landmine survivors offered updates of their efforts to implement their victim assistance obligations to ensure that survivors can exercise their rights on an equal basis with others and in larger contexts of disability.
- Some of these States are also among some of the poorest in the world which will make meeting their obligation more challenging.
- States encouraged the exchange of information and experiences, where applicable, regarding how victim assistance is dealt with under different conventions.

Destroying stockpiles

- **Poland**, with a 1 June 2017 deadline indicated that it had now destroyed 1,055,971 landmines and had decided not to keep any landmines for training employing instead alternative methods. “The vast majority of mines were destroyed without adverse effect on the environment – through recycling of its components, wood and metal, and using extracted TNT material for military training and other specific purposes, such as breaking ice jams on rivers.”
- With Poland’s efforts, there are now 158 States that no longer hold stockpiles. Together the States Parties have destroyed **over 49 million landmines**.
- **Belarus, Greece and Ukraine** – have missed their deadlines for the destruction of their stockpiled anti-personnel mines.
 - **Greece** has faced a unique challenge since 2014 when a deadly explosion of a Bulgarian destruction facility—where Greece’s stocks were being destroyed—halted its efforts. Greece indicated it has undertaken conversations with Bulgaria “to destroy the remaining mines in Bulgaria instead of transferring them back to Greece”.
 - Both **Belarus and Ukraine** face particular challenges in meeting their deadline, as PFM-1 mines are extremely hazardous and pose serious technical difficulties to destroy.

Universal adoption of the Convention

- **162 States** are part of the Convention including the majority of States that have been affected by landmines; all members of the European Union; every State in Sub-Saharan Africa, and every State in the Americas except for Cuba and the United States.
- **35 States** have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention. Combined, six of them – China, India, the Republic of Korea, Pakistan, Russia and the United States – may hold tens of millions of stockpiled antipersonnel mines. China, India and the United States attended the Convention as Observers and expressed agreement with the Convention’s humanitarian objectives.
- Other States not party to the Convention that attended the 15MSP as Observers included Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and Sri Lanka. The latter had previously indicated that it is working to join the treaty.

- The **United States of America** said that the process it had started to “find ways that would allow the US to ultimately fully comply with and accede to the Ottawa Convention while ensuring its ability to respond to contingencies on the Korean peninsula” is still ongoing. “The security of the Republic of Korea remains a paramount concern as we go forward.”
- The States Parties condemned that some armed non-state actors have made use landmines.

Next Presidencies

- The conference elected **Austria** as the next presidency of the Convention effective immediately.
- Austria will chair the Convention's Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties (16MSP) from 18 to 22 December 2017 in Vienna.
- Afghanistan has put forward its candidacy to lead the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties (17MSP) in 2018.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (the Ottawa Convention) was adopted in Oslo in 1997, opened for signature in Ottawa the same year and entered into force in 1999.

The Convention was the first disarmament instrument to take into account the needs of the victims of a particular weapon. More than 49 million landmines have been destroyed by the States Parties.