

Standing Committee IV on the General Status and Operation of the Convention
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ICBL intervention on Universalisation
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The Convention banning antipersonnel landmines entered into force the first of March 1999, with the 40th country, namely Burkina Faso, becoming a State Party, 15 month after the signing of the Convention in Ottawa, in December 1997. In March 1999, 65 countries had ratified the Convention ; between March 1999 and March 2000 : another 26 States joined, followed by 20 countries between March 2000 and March 2001.

Since March 2001, 11 countries ratified and/or acceded to the Convention¹. The most recent being Algeria, Nigeria, Chile and Eritrea. ICBL would like to thank them again here for having either completed the commitment they made when they signed the Convention, or agreed to join.

This brings us to the current total of 122 States Parties. 20 States have signed but not yet ratified and we still have a long list of 51 countries who remain outside the Convention. Some of them have already indicated they could complete the process of their ratification rapidly.

Some countries have indicated that they may ratify or accede in the near future, including Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia ; some have already ratified but their instrument of ratification have not reached the United Nations yet, this is the case for Cameroon, Gambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Suriname ; finally other countries may take significant steps by the 4MSP toward their accession.

But with only 11 countries having acceded to or ratified the Convention in the last period (11 is a relatively small number compared to the previous periods), the Campaign would like to warn on the danger of seeing this number decreasing if important, coordinated and sustained efforts towards ALL the 51 non signatories do not take place, starting from now.

Canada just reported on the positive and constructive outcomes of the UCG meeting yesterday. The Campaign was very pleased to see a lot of commitment, including the organisation by Thailand of the seminar on Landmines ; participants also agreed on means and tools to appropriately and creatively address the need for the Convention to be joined by ALL States. We hope to be able to hear about all the positive work done during the next session of the Standing Committees in May.

With its 90 Campaigns and, also being able to rely on the huge network of Landmine Monitor Researchers to help with the understanding of the reasons why some countries do not accede to the Convention, the ICBL will certainly continue to do its share of the work. We are currently updating our 2004 Action plan, and planning our activities for this year.

¹ Algeria 9 Oct/ Cape verde May 01/ Chile 10 sept, Congo Brazza May 01/ Eritrea 27 august/
Guinea Bissau 22 May / Malta 7 May/ Nigeria 27 Sept / St Vincent and the Grenadines 1
August/ Sierra Leone 25 Apr/ Uruguay 7 Jun/

We will, again, be active in the organisation of public and media events (like the regional seminar in Rajasthan, India which has just started today) or Action alerts, like the two previous ones we did on the US Policy Review or the use of new mines at the border between India and Pakistan, or the use of international governmental or parliamentarians fora and meetings like the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of States or Governments meeting, the Francophonie, the European Union, the ASEAN, OAS or the UNGA.

An important aspect of the mine problem that has not been adequately addressed by States Parties and others is that of non-state actors, or NSAs. Armed groups, acting against or beyond the control of states also use, produce, and stockpile antipersonnel mines. Many people live on mined land under non-state control. Some states have said they will not accede to the Mine Ban Treaty because of NSA use. It is clear that an inter state ban alone is insufficient to stop new landmines from being put into the ground, and to clear all those already planted.

An increasing number of governments are acknowledging the necessity of engaging NSAs. We encourage this and will continue this work through our NSA working group.

As it has been said during the UCG meeting, we can do a lot together and make our efforts far more effective if they are coordinated. So we encourage States Parties to share this information with us, and to take contact with us on any information they may want on our activities, which are also detailed on our regularly updated website : www.icbl.org. Where you will also be able to find a lot of resources, material, and the calendar of events.

We need your support and active role to help meeting the challenge the Campaign decided to try to meet by the 4MSP which is 135 ratifications/accessions.

Thank you.