



ICRC

**Tenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention
on the
Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production
and
Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction**

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**Statement by
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A year ago, the Second Review Conference of this Convention recorded the collective achievements of the 156 States Parties and adopted an ambitious Action Plan for the years 2010-2014. The Cartagena Action Plan acknowledges the formidable challenges to be addressed if we are to end the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines and achieve a world free of these horrific weapons. Time is ticking away. We are now at a point in the life of the Convention where not only meetings are important but more actual implementation is essential.

Let me mention the four main challenges now before us. One of the greatest challenges is **achieving a measurable improvement in the lives of landmine survivors**. Handicap International's 2009 survey of survivors entitled "Voices from the ground" was supported in many countries by the ICRC. This report showed that of the survivors interviewed in 25 countries only 25% thought that services were better in 2009 compared to 2005. The Cartagena Action Plan identifies the key steps that each affected State party should undertake to ensure high-quality care, support and opportunities for mine victim and other persons with disabilities. It also stresses that to fulfil the Convention's promises to survivors, greater political commitment and more resources are needed.

The ICRC proposed this year that States Parties should focus increasingly on implementing victim assistance commitments in specific national contexts. The Standing Committee on Victim Assistance should facilitate much more in-depth discussion of national contexts and challenges. The ICRC is pleased that this proposal is included to some extent in the Norwegian President's paper on the review of the Intersessional Work program. It also thanks the States Parties that indicated last June that they would be ready to have an in-depth discussion of their victim assistance efforts and needs as part of a pilot project during the 2011 Standing Committee meetings. Smaller and more focused informal sessions are an essential tool for achieving measurable improvements in the lives of landmine victims and their affected communities.

The **second challenge is resources**. The Convention's continued success depends almost entirely on the mobilization and effective use of resources for clearance, stockpile destruction and victim assistance at national and international levels. The focus that the Norwegian Presidency put this year on the resource issue is most welcomed. Discussions have highlighted the need to address this challenge with the same degree of focus as has been brought to bear for the other positive action commitments of the Convention in the fields of clearance, stockpile destruction and victim assistance. To achieve this, the ICRC urges States to support the proposal for a new Standing Committee on Resources made by Zambia and others at the Cartagena Summit and again in June. A Standing Committee or similar structure should address all issues relevant to achieving the Convention's aims, including national mobilisation and priority setting, resource utilisation, how to access mine action resources available through specific donors, private sector support and the need for dedicated funding.

We must recognise that recent funding levels, although significant, are not adequate for achieving the Convention's clearance and victim assistance commitments. The result has been an excessive number of requests for extension of clearance deadlines and, more importantly, lives lost from preventable mine accidents and the continued marginalisation of mine victims in many affected communities.

The **destruction of stockpiles**, the third challenge, has been one of the great successes of this Convention. More than 43 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines have been destroyed. In the last six years alone, 13 States Parties have complied with their obligations under Article 4. However, we are also facing an unprecedented situation in the life of the Convention, with four States Parties in non-compliance with their stockpile destruction deadlines. This should be a serious concern for all States Parties, even if specific reasons can be provided for why this situation has occurred in each case. Compliance is essential to the credibility of the Convention. A "culture of compliance" sends a signal to all States Parties that have obligations to fulfil, whether they pertain to destroying stocks, clearing mined areas or assisting victims. Some of the four States in question have made progress in the last year; but in the case of others, a year has passed without the destruction of any additional mines. We urge States Parties and other donors supporting destruction activities to continuously devote a high level of political attention to this issue until the remaining administrative and financial obstacles have been overcome and the stockpiles destroyed.

The fourth challenge is **mine clearance**. There were originally five States Parties with clearance deadlines in 2011. Only one of these, Zambia, is not requesting an extension request, having met its obligations on time. Out of the four remaining countries, one has neither submitted a request nor confirmed that it would comply with its obligation by its original deadline. In the view of the ICRC, the large number of recent extension requests is unfortunate given the humanitarian imperative, and the article 5 obligation, to destroy mines in mined areas "as soon as possible".

This meeting will have to review and decide on granting extension requests to six countries, including three which are coming back for their second extension requests. We call on all delegations to conduct their own analysis of these requests with the benefit of reports provided by the analyzing group and the valuable perspectives provided by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. Above all, decisions on the requests and the comments made by this Meeting should put the protection of civilians from landmines above political and regional considerations.

This Convention contains a comprehensive prescription for ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines. But, as I said at the outset, this requires more actual implementation. We need not only the Cartagena action points but a much stronger link between official meetings and the decisions being made in the capitals of both affected and donor countries about priorities, plans and resources.

Next year the Meeting of States Parties is expected to be hosted by Cambodia, a country where in 1995 the International Campaign to Ban Landmines held the first global conference on the landmine problem in an affected country. In Cambodia, we hope to welcome a number of new States Parties to this Convention. We look forward in particular to a positive outcome of the current US policy review and that of other States. The work done here this week must ensure that the Convention is reviewed in Cambodia with far more clearance done, more benefits extended to victims, more resources committed and more momentum behind it. It is not action points, but actions, that will forever end the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines.