

**12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties**  
**Statement of Canada - General Exchange of Views**

Thank you Mr. President

Firstly I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of this meeting. Please be assured that you have our support both during this meeting and during the year of your Presidency.

Mr. President, we understand the need to limit statements during the general exchange of views and have not normally spoken on this agenda item. However, I think it would be useful at this juncture to present a bit of an overview of where we think we are with this Convention, now 15 years and one day after the opening of the signature conference in Ottawa in 1997.

In the 15 intervening years we have had some considerable, even remarkable, success. Most of the countries in the world have joined, production is minimal, use is low at least when compared to 15 years ago, the new norm has been firmly established, sales are minimal or non-existent, billions of square metres of land have been cleared and survivors are in great part, being provided for.

I think it was the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2007 when the ICBL coined the phrase "a success in progress" and we still are a success in progress but Canada views that progress as starting to slow with perhaps some cracks in the concrete that makes up this Convention starting to appear. As we mark this 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we see this in a host of different ways.

The first chink in the concrete of the Convention was likely the slow pace we experienced in providing needed support to the victims of anti-personnel mines and their families.

The next fissure was likely the failure of four states parties, now fortunately down to three, to meet the relatively simple problem of destroying their stockpiles of anti-personnel mines. Until this occurred the successful destruction of stockpiles had been considered to be a tremendous success story - not so now.

The next fracture in the concrete of the Convention was likely the failure, in many cases for preventable reasons, for states parties to meet their clearance deadlines and now at this meeting we are considering our 31<sup>st</sup> to 34<sup>th</sup> extension request, while only 20 states parties have actually achieved the clearance goal, something I am certain the drafters of the Convention, perhaps naively, never envisioned.

But we now may have a major and perhaps widening gap in the concrete with first one and now five states parties, states parties mind and not those who are outside of the Convention, alleged to have used mines in the recent past. That is something that could significantly damage the fabric of this Convention and we urge those concerned states parties to move quickly to investigate and resolve all of the allegations and in the spirit of transparency, for which this Convention is known, report the results to the next meeting.

Mr. President, we can fill the gaps, the fractures, the fissures and the chinks, and we can heal the concrete of the Convention, so that it is better than new. We view the allegations of use as perhaps a wake call which might help to reinvigorate and reenergise the Convention, but only with dedicated effort and attention on the part of all states parties, all of our partners in civil society and all of the individuals present in this room today.

Thank you.