



ICRC

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**14th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use,
Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their
Destruction, Geneva, 30 November – 4 December 2015**

Address by Christine Beerli,

Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

Nearly 18 months ago, States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention renewed their commitment “to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines” by agreeing to a comprehensive and ambitious programme: the Maputo Action Plan. This week, States Parties will have an opportunity to take stock of the progress made in implementing the Plan and ensuring that its goals are realized.

Significant progress has been made, since the 3rd Review Conference, in alleviating the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines: Finland has destroyed its stockpile of one million anti-personnel mines; Burundi has cleared suspected mined areas; and Mozambique, a country once severely affected by anti-personnel mines, is no longer under threat from these weapons. These are critical milestones because the clearance and destruction of anti-personnel mines saves lives and limbs and preserves livelihoods. On behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), I congratulate Finland, Burundi and Mozambique for these achievements.

The global norm prohibiting anti-personnel mines also continues to be reinforced. The accession of Oman to the Convention last year, which the ICRC warmly welcomes, raised the number of States Parties to 162. The ICRC also commends the United States for its new landmine policy, announced in September 2014. Under this policy, the United States is taking a number of steps that align it with the aims and key requirements of the Convention. Actions such as these are helping to further stigmatize anti-personnel mines and are important evidence that persistence of effort can yield significant results, even moving countries with large stockpiles of anti-personnel mines towards joining the treaty. Even so, the ICRC urges those countries that are not party to the Convention to lose no time in joining it, and in the meantime, to renounce the use of anti-personnel mines in all circumstances.

These are very welcome developments: each of them brings us closer to a world free of anti-personnel mines. But they are no cause for complacency. There are still anti-personnel mines in too many parts of the world and they still wreck far too many lives. Important challenges remain, and they must be addressed. I would like to draw your attention to a few that are of particular concern to the ICRC.

The first is the ongoing use of antipersonnel mines – including improvised mines – by both State forces and non-State armed groups. We are particularly concerned about allegations

of the use of anti-personnel mines on territory under the jurisdiction or control of several States Parties. In the ICRC's view, any use of anti-personnel mines is unacceptable.

In addition, there remain 33 States Parties that have obligations under the Convention to clear anti-personnel mines from their territory. Most of them have been granted at least one extension of the Convention's 10-year deadline. However, only a few of them appear to have the necessary plans in place to meet their clearance commitments. The ICRC urges those States that have not already done so, to clarify, as a matter of urgency, the clearance challenges they face and to develop adequate national demining plans so that they can meet their clearance deadlines and avoid the need for multiple extension requests.

Although most of the 31 States Parties with significant numbers of anti-personnel mine victims have made substantial progress in the area of victim assistance, we know that for far too many disabled people, including survivors of anti-personnel mines, access to services and full inclusion in their societies are still beset with difficulties. These States must redouble their efforts to eliminate such obstacles and to secure full, equal and effective participation in society for all mine victims and others with disabilities. To achieve these goals, they must accurately assess the needs of victims, identify gaps in existing services and set clear and time-bound objectives.

It is worth noting here that the Maputo Action Plan can help us deal with all these matters. As we know, success will require a strong national sense of responsibility and accountability and commitment to finding solutions, as well as enhanced international cooperation and assistance. This formula has worked well for addressing many of the challenges faced thus far. We are convinced that it can continue to be effective. Guided by the same spirit of cooperation and partnership that have made this Convention a great success, we can finish the job and end the era of anti-personnel mines once and for all. The full implementation of the Action Plan and the decisions taken at this meeting can bring us closer to that goal.

Thank you.