

**Remark by ICBL Ambassador, Margaret Arach Orech, at the Opening Plenary of  
the 7MSP**

**Geneva 18 September 2006**

Your Excellency, the President, Distinguished Delegates, fellow Survivors, Ladies and Gentlemen

In the past, you have been used to hearing Jody Williams speaking on behalf of the ICBL. Jody will not be able to join us before tomorrow as she is speaking at the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Peace Jam with eleven other Nobel Peace Laureates. My name is Margaret Arach Orech, and like Jody I am an ICBL Ambassador. I am also a landmine survivor from Uganda.

It is my pleasure and privilege to be the voice of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines to this august gathering as we mark another milestone on our tireless journey to a world without antipersonnel mines.

Over the past years, States Parties have been faithful in attending the Mine Ban Treaty meetings and Intersessionals ritually. Many ideas have been conceived and tools developed to assist States Parties to plan and execute their obligations to the treaty. In more ways than one, we have taken an idea to shape a reality. In signing the treaty, States Parties made a pledge, a promise to stop the manufacture, use, and transfer of antipersonnel mines and to destroy all antipersonnel in their possession. States Parties are obliged to clear mined areas, help survivors and be faithful to all the treaty's provisions. Is this the reality on the ground?

Is mine action being considered among the national priorities in mine-affected countries? Have States Parties exhausted all resources to ensure that they have identified, marked and cleared all mined areas as soon as possible and not later than 10 years after the convention entered into force for their respective countries? Are States Parties including

survivors in their national development programs? Are survivors present this week among States Parties' delegations? Are States Parties providing adequate assistance through international cooperation to ensure compliance? Do States Parties have pragmatic plans in place to respond to my questions?

In the ICBL, we see that our role is to monitor, encourage and help governments to honor their commitments to the Mine Ban Treaty. We will hold them accountable for what they have by act of omission failed to do. In nearly every country, the threat of antipersonnel mines should now be a thing of the past. Lives need to be saved and those already maimed need to be supported in order for them to reintegrate and be able to live independently in their community.

We appreciate the positive achievements registered so far; however, are we on the right track to ensure that our efforts do have a real impact? If we are on the right track, are we moving as quickly as is demanded by the humanitarian imperative, and indeed by the treaty itself?

As you reflect on these words, please remember, we must be diligent in protecting and honoring the letter and the spirit of the Mine Ban Treaty and shift from Words to Reality.