

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE TO THE NINTH 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

Geneva, 24 November 2008

*Delivered by Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze,
Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva*

I extend warm greetings to all participants of the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention. The success of this Convention bears witness to the capacity of the international community to unite in an urgent, humanitarian cause. Indeed, that example helped to inspire the adoption earlier this year of an international convention banning deadly cluster munitions.

I commend the strenuous efforts of States Parties to the Mine-Ban Convention, and successive Presidents of your meetings, to implement and universalize the Convention in pursuit of a world free of mines. I must especially thank the outgoing President, His Royal Highness Prince Mired of Jordan, for his important work on mine action and his support for mine survivors, particularly in the Middle East.

Your efforts this week will touch on two matters of special significance.

The first is the challenge encapsulated in the second preambular paragraph of the Convention, which underlines that States Parties believe "it necessary to do their utmost (...) to face the challenge of removing anti-personnel mines placed throughout the world, and to assure their destruction". The plight of communities that face physical harm and constrained access to land is clear. Your responsibility is to ensure sustained financial support for mine clearance activities, especially in the more than 30 developing countries that confront this danger and hardship on a daily basis.

Second is next year's Review Conference, which will be a milestone in the short history of the Convention. The First Review Conference resulted in the Nairobi Action Plan, which has formed the basis of your work since. I commend the practical, results-based approach taken by the Parties to date, and urge you to lay the groundwork for the treaty's second review.

Finally, I urge all States that have not yet done so to accede as soon as possible to the Mine Ban Convention. This treaty is a classic case of disarmament as humanitarian action, and an excellent example of decisive action to rid the world of a cruel and indiscriminate weapon.

Please accept my best wishes for the success of your important activities and deliberations.