

Press Release



Anti-landmines movement grows stronger upon returning to its birthplace

Phnom Penh, Cambodia 28 November 2011 – The Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties (11MSP) of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or *Ottawa Convention*, officially opened this morning with signs that the anti-landmines movement is growing stronger.

The opening session of the largest ever multilateral meeting in Cambodia was highlighted by Tuvalu and South Sudan taking their seats as the Convention's newest adherents and Finland's Minister of International Development announcing that Finland is on the verge of becoming the 159th to join the Convention.

"The Parliament of Finland approved accession three days ago and the Government of Finland is now in the process of finalizing the decision," said Finland's Minister of International Development, Heidi Hautala. "This means that we will deposit our instrument of accession with the UN Secretary-General in coming weeks."

Also during the opening session, the Convention's parties formally elected H.E. PRAK Sokhonn, Minister Attached to the Prime Minister and Vice President of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), as President of the 11MSP. H.E. PRAK Sokhonn will proceed in chairing the 11MSP over the next five days.

"I am pleased that several states not parties to the Convention, including China, the Lao PDR, Myanmar, Singapore and the United States of America, are attending the 11MSP as observers," said H.E. PRAK Sokhonn. "This is a sign that there is strong interest in our movement, even by those that have not yet joined the Convention."

The opening of the 11MSP was also marked by a powerful message from His Majesty Norodom Sihamoni, King of Cambodia, who recalled Cambodia's role in the emergence of the anti-landmines movement. "It is an honour and privilege for Cambodia and her people to welcome the world to the birthplace of the Convention and to host and preside over the meeting," said His Majesty.

At the 11MSP, delegates will consider the *Phnom Penh Progress Report*, a detailed document measuring progress in the past year and highlighting priority areas of work to be acted upon for the year to come.

On 30 November, the 11MSP will feature a special session marking two decades since the anti-landmines movement emerged from countries such as Cambodia.

The 11MSP will also take decisions on requests for extensions of ten year mine clearance deadlines which have been submitted by Algeria, Chile, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Eritrea.

In addition, throughout the week, over 30 side events will take place with several showcasing Cambodia's efforts to clear mined areas and to assist survivors.

AP Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was adopted in Oslo in 1997, opened for signature in Ottawa the same year and entered into force in 1999.

To date 158 states have joined the Convention with 153 of these reporting that they no longer hold stocks of anti-personnel mines. Over 44.5 million stockpiled mines have been destroyed by the States Parties.

34 of 50 States that at one time manufactured anti-personnel mines are now bound by the Convention's ban on production. Most other parties have put in place moratoria on production and / or transfers of mines.

Demining has resulted in millions of square metres of once dangerous land being released for normal human activity.

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For interviews or more information regarding any aspect of the Convention kindly email: ISU@APMineBanConvention.org or contact Laila Rodriguez at +855 97 6890 977 or +41 79 960 2274. Connect with the Convention through our [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) or [Twitter](#).