



Press Release

International community gathers in Geneva to discuss landmine challenges

Geneva, 7 June 2018 – The annual intersessional meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention opened today in Geneva with nearly 300 delegates representing more than 75 States and 17 international and non-governmental organisations; these meetings amount to the world’s largest gathering of mine action experts and officials.

It is a packed agenda for the 7-8 June meeting including the presentation of reports by 29 States Parties that have indicated responsibility for the well-being of significant numbers of landmine survivors; including some of the poorest countries on earth; and 3 that must destroy remaining stockpiles (2 of them in Europe).

Five European countries request additional time to clear landmine-contaminated zones

In addition, 31 States Parties undergoing mine clearance (11 of them in Europe) will present updates of their efforts. Of those, **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Serbia, Sudan and the United Kingdom** will be presenting requests to extend their mine clearance deadlines. The States Parties will hear the reasons behind the requests (from resources to environment challenges). The Conference could ask these States to provide additional details, and will provide its Decision in November when the parties meet formally again in Geneva.

“This mid-year assessment of our efforts is the backbone of the Convention when delegations from affected States and those in a position to assist, together with international and non-governmental organisations, discuss the challenges that remain in implementing the Convention and the manner in which the Convention objectives can be met,” said H.E. Suraya Dalil, Ambassador of Afghanistan to Switzerland who leads the discussions in Geneva, and will steer the Conference towards its meeting in late 2018. **“Today we are experiencing a number of conflicts around the world where anti-personnel mines are being employed; therefore, we need to ensure that our Convention remains a strong framework and do not compromise the norm the Convention has established.”**

“The Convention is also leading an individualised approach which sees affected States address their challenges directly with international stakeholders in a manner that highlights national ownership and transparency of action. This innovative approach is what is needed at this juncture in the Convention’s existence,” said the Ambassador.

At the meeting the individualised approach will concentrate on Serbia and Sri Lanka.

The Convention, adopted and signed in 1997, entered into force in 1999. Under the Convention, 30 of 61 mine-affected States have declared completion of their mine clearance obligation freeing for normal use millions of square metres of land. All but 33 of the world’s States have joined the Convention; most of which obey its norms. 159 States Parties no longer have stockpile destruction obligations, together these States have destroyed over 51 million stockpiled mines.