

Press Release



Cambodia hosts Asian countries in preparation for global landmines meeting

Phnom Penh, 20 September 2011 – Representatives of eleven Asian nations have gathered in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, to address the human cost of anti-personnel mines.

The meeting, hosted by the Cambodia Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), is one of the main events in the build-up to the Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties (11MSP) to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

“This week’s Asian regional seminar seeks to enhance international dialogue in the region regardless of whether States are part of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention,” said His Excellency PRAK Sokhonn, Vice-President of the CMAA and President-Designate of the upcoming 11MSP. “Taking this approach, we can ensure that all States remain engaged in the work of the Convention, one way or another.”

His Excellency PRAK Sokhonn has been leading efforts to intensify the participation in the Convention by South East Asian states. In addition, in August His Excellency PRAK Sokhonn led a high level mission to engage Vietnamese leaders and in October he plans to visit Singapore. Representatives from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam are participating in this week’s event in Phnom Penh.

At this week’s gathering, mine affected countries and those in a position to assist them are expected to share experiences and challenges in implementing the Convention.

“Lack of resources, in particular to meet clearance and victim assistance obligations, is a real issue that cannot be lightly dismissed. Diminishing resources do affect States’ ability to fulfill their obligations under the Mine Ban Convention,” said Mr. Nicolas OLIVIER, Head of the ICRC in Cambodia. “It is therefore critical to strengthen the partnership between mine-affected States Parties and donors, and to match identified needs with available resources, even if international support must always complement national efforts,” added.

Mr. Douglas BRODERICK, the United Nations Resident Coordinator, emphasized the negative impact landmines have on development. “They prevent access to farm land and slow down the construction of critical infrastructure such as schools, health centres and roads. They create fear and leave people with a feeling of insecurity many years after conflicts have ended. Those that survive a landmine accident will require medical and social welfare support for their entire lives. In summary, landmines are a burden that weighs heavily on a country’s social and economic development.”

Also this week in Siem Reap, Cambodia is playing host to over 100 technical specialists from around the world who are gathering to discuss enhanced mine clearance techniques and innovative approaches to releasing suspected hazardous areas.

Landmines in Cambodia

As one of the most mine-affected countries in the world, Cambodia sparked the international movement to ban these weapons, and is at the forefront of the promotion of a universal ban on anti-personnel landmines.

Landmines in Cambodia are a result of 30 years of armed conflict. Financial support from development partners has helped remove and destroy 902,913 landmines from 1992 to January 2011. It is estimated that some 650 million square metres of land are still contaminated by landmines; one-third of landmine survivors are children.

The Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties (11MSP)

The 11MSP will be the first time Cambodia hosts and presides over a Meeting of the States Parties. It will take place at the Peace Palace, in Phnom Penh from 27 November to 2 December 2011. It is the single largest international meeting ever held in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

The Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties is a formal, diplomatic meeting of the 156 States which have accepted the Convention. They include most of the States that at one time used, stockpiled, produced or transferred AP mines and the vast majority of States that are or have been affected by AP mines. Several States that are not part of the Convention are expected to attend as Observers.

The 11MSP is particularly significant because the Convention is returning to a place where it all started two decades ago. As such, it is an opportunity for the international community to recall how far the world has come in pursuing a comprehensive end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.

The 11MSP is a springboard to further action and an opportunity to state that the commitment to this cause will not end until the task is complete.

Over 1,000 diplomats representing over 100 States and delegates from dozens of international and non-governmental organisations are expected to attend. It is expected that South East Asian countries will be represented at a high political level.

###

For more information, please contact:



កម្ពុជា
C.M.A.A

H.E. NETH Sophal: 012 938 461, nethsophal@cmaa.gov.kh/ public.relation@hotmail.com



Ms. Melissa SABATIER: 012 531 731, melissa.sabatier@undp.org



Ms. Laila RODRIGUEZ: +41 79 960 2274, ISU@apminebanconvention.org

Connect with the Convention through our [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) or [Twitter](#)