

ICBL Statement at the Launch of the "Road to Cartagena"
Firoz Ali Alizada, Treaty Implementation Officer
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The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) is pleased to join today's launch of the Road to Cartagena. Many of you already heard my remarks earlier this afternoon on the significance of the Mine Ban Treaty for me and my country as a landmine survivor from Afghanistan. But the voices of survivors and other ICBL campaigners are also being heard around the world today as we also mark the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the convention. In order to celebrate the anniversary and also to raise the profile of the convention in this Review Conference year, the ICBL has been holding events in over 60 countries around March 1st. From Afghanistan to Zambia, from Colombia to the United States, ICBL campaigners are holding public events, organizing roundtables, engaging with the media, sending letters and visiting embassies of states not party to the treaty.

The ICBL is also busy preparing for the treaty's Second Review Conference, which has enormous symbolic and practical importance in the life of the convention. ICBL campaigners, including many landmine survivors, have already been participating actively in the regional conferences preparing for the Review Conference, beginning with a delegation of over 15 people in Managua. We will continue to participate in national, regional, and international meetings so that we can ensure the meeting lives up to our high expectations.

So what do we expect from this conference? First and foremost, we want it to signal to the world that the landmine problem is not at all solved and needs the continued energy of all actors until the treaty's promise is fulfilled. There are too many large steps along the path to a mine-free world to stop our efforts any time soon: 39 states are not yet party to the treaty; millions of stockpiles still have to be destroyed and three states are currently not in compliance with their destruction deadline; thousands of square kilometers of mined land needs to be cleared and a surprisingly high 15 states had to ask for extra time to clear their land last year; hundreds of thousands of survivors are still waiting to see a real difference in their daily lives. We expect all of these issues to be addressed at the Review Conference.

We will talk more about these challenges during the discussions later this afternoon, but now I want to briefly present some of our general expectations for the Review Conference:

- We expect all States Parties to participate in the Review Conference at the highest possible level, and we encourage all States not Parties to also participate as observers. The Review Conference will provide a great opportunity to work with all such actors to ensure that landmines stay high on their agenda and that through all our combined efforts, the words of the Convention become a reality on the ground.
- We expect the Review Conference to send a clear message of continued commitment to the convention until there is universal membership and it is fully implemented. Such commitment should be stated in form of a strong, forward-looking political declaration and through country statements in a high-level segment.

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- In addition to a political declaration, we also expect there to be a comprehensive review of progress over the last five years that not only lays out concrete accomplishments, but also clearly identifies continuing challenges in treaty implementation, especially the cases of non-compliance with core treaty obligations.
- We expect the Review Conference to also have a strong forward-looking component. It should draw lessons from the past to shape a “SMART” action plan that sets out concrete objectives for States Parties to achieve by the next Review Conference.
- The Review Conference should provide momentum for significant new accomplishments. For example, we expect four States Parties to make the special effort to finish their stockpile destruction, several states to announce completion of mine clearance obligations, states with a significant responsibility for landmine survivors to have a national plan of action in place by the Review Conference, all states to have turned in their initial transparency reports, and significantly larger numbers of States Parties to have complied obligations to submit annual transparency reports and adopt national implementation measures.
- ICBL would also like to see great new accomplishments in the area of universalization, especially after not having a new State Party in over a year. We will continue to pressure those states that choose to stay outside of the Mine Ban Treaty to join the treaty without further delay and to adopt interim measures in the meantime. We call upon States Parties to use every available opportunity this year to do likewise, calling on States not Parties to join by the Review Conference and publicly condemning those who continue to use antipersonnel mines.
- International cooperation and assistance must continue until these challenges are met, and so we expect all states to go to Cartagena with new commitments of cooperation and assistance, whether they are financial, technical, or in-kind support. At the same time, we expect the Review Conference to continue to emphasize the need for more Parties to take ownership of mine action and victim assistance programs so they can be sustainable over the long term.
- In addition, we believe that the Review Conference should explore where the treaty would benefit from building synergies with new related instruments – instruments that were built in part on the Mine Ban Convention experience – such as the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and to some extent the Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities.
- Finally, we have a special opportunity for this Review Conference because of the location. Colombia – because it is a country that is experiencing first-hand the daily horror of living with antipersonnel mines, and with one of the world’s highest rates of new victims – is highly symbolic and hopefully will contribute to re-focusing attention on the ongoing challenges and redoubling efforts to address them. We hope that Colombia will contribute to the success of the Review Conference not only providing the necessary support and organization, but also, and more importantly by giving the good example on some of the key issues affecting the lives of Colombian citizens living under the constant threat of landmines, or having survived a landmine accident.

The treaty begins with a call “to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.” At the 2nd Review Conference this goal needs to be at the center of all our discussions on evaluating progress and setting out future work. The ICBL strongly believes that we can achieve such a goal if we all pledge to renew our commitment and energy. We remain optimistic that a “mine-free world” - meaning one in which the Mine Ban Treaty is universally adhered to and implemented – is an achievable goal. In the words of our Review Conference slogan, we believe it is “Mission Possible.” Thank you.