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More Vigilance Needed on Global Landmine Ban

(Geneva, 25 May 2012): A meeting of nearly 100 states and dozens of international organisations to discuss progress on the global ban on antipersonnel landmines ended today with both good and bad news.

While celebrating landmine-affected Somalia becoming the 160th State Party to the Mine Ban Treaty this week, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) has also been compelled to raise alarm bells at the conference.

Confirmed use of antipersonnel landmines in four non-States Parties in the last year, and serious allegations of use in three states that have joined the Treaty, is of particularly serious concern.

“With these very worrying reports of use of landmines we fear that the global stigma the Mine Ban Treaty has established in the 15 years since it was adopted is under attack,” said Kasia Derlicka, Director of the ICBL.

Also highly disturbing is the fact three states – Belarus, Greece and Ukraine – remain in violation of the Treaty for missing their stockpile destruction deadlines, with no destruction currently under way in any of these states.

Some countries reported significant achievements in clearing their land, but in many others where people live in daily fear from landmines progress remains frustratingly slow. The ICBL and the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) both expressed serious concern that the list of countries requesting extensions to clear their land is growing faster than the list of those who have been declared mine-free.

“We heard many states express their commitment to meeting their clearance obligations, but we need to see concrete plans and much quicker progress. Countless families are waiting to be able to use this land without fearing for their lives,” Derlicka said.

States and civil society organisations used the meetings to discuss whether programmes to provide assistance to victims is actually making a difference in the daily lives of survivors. The ICBL emphasised that monitoring progress at the local level is not only possible but is happening in Cambodia among other places.

Also worryingly, more than half of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty have failed to live up to their legal obligations to submit their annual transparency reports on their progress against the landmine ban.

This mixture of both encouraging and alarming news was illustrated by the following specific announcements during the meeting:

GOVERNANCE BOARD
Afghan Landmine Survivors' Organization
Action on Armed Violence (United Kingdom)
Asociación para Políticas Públicas (Argentina)
Cambodia Campaign to Ban Landmines
Campana Colombiana Contra Minas
Dan Church Aid
Handicap International
Human Rights Watch
ICBL Georgian Committee
IKV Pax Christi (The Netherlands)
IPPNW (Russia and Zambia)
Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines
Mines Action Canada
Nepal Campaign to Ban Landmines
Norwegian People's Aid
Protection (Egypt)
Religions for Peace

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- Somalia's accession means all of sub-Saharan Africa has now banned antipersonnel landmines, and Poland's commitment to finally ratify the Treaty later this year will bring the whole of Europe under the ban. This is marred by confirmed use of landmines in 2011 by Libya (forces loyal to Gaddafi), Israel, Myanmar and Syria, reports of use in States Parties Yemen and Sudan in 2012, and ongoing allegations that Turkey's armed forces members used landmines in 2009;
- Angola, Afghanistan, Cyprus and Zimbabwe's requests to extend their deadlines for landmine clearance brings the number of affected States Parties unable to meet their original timeframe for clearance to 27, yet Cambodia, Croatia and Mauritania all announced improved efficiency and speed in clearance and land release;
- Niger reported mines areas for the first time though their clearance deadline was in 2009, and Burundi reported having mined areas though it had already declared finishing clearing all such areas.

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Notes to editors:

For more information about this year's meeting of Intersessional Steering Committees to the Mine Ban Treaty, taking place this week in Geneva, please visit the [ICBL's website](#), or the [Anti Personnel Mine Ban Convention's website](#).

Follow the ICBL on Twitter for live updates from the meeting: www.twitter.com/minefreeworld

For detailed information about Somalia's landmine / ERW problem, casualty and mine clearance data please visit the [Landmine Monitor Country Profile](#).

ICBL INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES: Multi-lingual interviews with campaigners and experts from all over the world are available. Please call Kate Wiggins to request an interview.