



Press Release

For Immediate Release
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**DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES MEMORIAL FUND
SUPPORTS U.S. CAMPAIGN TO BAN LANDMINES
United States Urged to Join Mine Ban Treaty**

The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund has awarded a grant to the United States Campaign to Ban Landmines & Cluster Bombs (USCBL), which is being used to increase media interest, build public support and urge greater action by the Obama Administration and the U.S. Congress.

NEW YORK - The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund has agreed to support the U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines over the next year as it works to bring the United States in line with the international treaties banning landmines and cluster munitions.

"Through her work with landmine survivors, Diana, Princess of Wales understood the devastating effects that landmines and unexploded remnants of war had on civilians and raised awareness about the need to ban antipersonnel mines," said Samantha Rennie, Head of Partnerships at The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund. "We are proud to support civil society efforts to urge the United States to not only provide victim assistance and support demining efforts, but to ensure that antipersonnel mines are never used again."

Many of the 156 governments that have joined the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty are expected to attend the agreement's Second Review Conference in Cartagena, Colombia, which will begin one month from today (November 29 - December 4, 2009). This milestone event, also known as the "Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World," is open to all states regardless of their position on banning antipersonnel landmines. The United States has been invited to attend, but it has not indicated whether it will participate.

"Most of the U.S.'s closest military allies have recognized that the human costs of these weapons far outweigh their military utility, but ten years on the United States still has not signed the Mine Ban Treaty," said Zach Hudson, USCBL Coordinator. "President Obama should initiate a comprehensive review of U.S. landmine policy and ensure that the U.S. re-engages with its allies on the landmine ban. The U.S. should also participate in the upcoming Second Mine Ban Treaty Review Conference in Cartagena which begins one month from today."

Although the United States was one of the first states to call for the eventual elimination of landmines in the mid-1990s, the U.S. did not sign the treaty when it opened for signature in 1997; instead President Clinton set 2006 as the goal for the U.S. to join the treaty. However, in 2004, President Bush reversed this decision.

The Mine Ban Treaty prohibits the use, production, stockpile and transfer of antipersonnel landmines. Since the treaty entered into force on March 1, 1999, new landmine use has been drastically curbed, casualty rates have fallen dramatically and large tracts of affected land have been cleared.

Last week Switzerland and the ICBL, together with Colombia and Norway, held a special event at the U.N. in New York to brief diplomats and the media on preparations for the Cartagena Summit. At the event, the United States and other governments that still have not joined the international treaty banning antipersonnel landmines were encouraged by the ICBL to participate in the forthcoming global summit and join the agreement without delay.

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The United States Campaign to Ban Landmines & Cluster Bombs, currently coordinated by Handicap International, is a coalition of thousands of people and U.S. non-governmental organizations working to: (1) ensure no U.S. use, production, transfer and export of antipersonnel landmines and cluster munitions; (2) encourage the U.S. to join the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty and the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions; and (3) secure high levels of U.S. government support for demining and assistance programs for victims of landmines, cluster munitions and other unexploded remnants of war. The USCBL is the U.S. affiliate of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)—the co-laureate of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize, and is a member of the Cluster Munition Coalition, an international coalition working to protect civilians from the effects of cluster munitions by promoting universal adherence to and full implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund continues the Princess' humanitarian work in the U.K. and overseas. By giving grants to organisations, championing charitable causes, advocacy, campaigning and awareness raising, the Fund works to secure sustainable improvements in the lives of the most vulnerable people in the U.K. and around the world.