

Statement on the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty

First Committee on Disarmament and International Security

16 October 2015



The International Campaign to Ban Landmines is a coalition of NGOs in some 100 countries working to address the suffering caused by antipersonnel mines, through the full universalization and implementation of the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty.

Among the remarkable recent developments, Mozambique completed the clearance of all contaminated areas. What might have been considered an insurmountable task 20 years ago has been done, thanks to political will and the use of appropriate methodology. This shows that if the right resources are employed in the right way, nearly every contaminated state can complete mine clearance within the next ten years. For this to happen, levels of international funding for mine action must be sustained.

Another remarkable event was the agreement on mine clearance reached between the government of Colombia and the FARC, which has already allowed for the start of a clearance pilot project.

The Mine Ban Treaty is among the most widely-accepted international treaties and has an excellent record of implementation. But it is not yet time to rest – some 60 states and areas still have contamination. In the vast majority of affected states, victims still do not see their basic needs met nor their rights respected.

Every year there are thousands of more casualties from mines and explosive remnants of war, and even as the annual number has steadily fallen, the total number of survivors continues to grow. Dedicated funding for victim assistance is still needed, even after the completion of mine clearance.

The Maputo Action Plan adopted in 2014 provides a clear road map with an ambitious ten-year aspirational deadline for ridding the world of antipersonnel mines. States will need to actively support the Maputo decisions in the coming years and should make the necessary adjustments to their policies, work plans, and economic priorities.

The goal of seeing no new use of antipersonnel mines anywhere in the world within a decade will require progress on universalization of the treaty and on the acceptance of the norm banning landmine use. In general, respect for the ban remains very high among both States Parties and states not party, and the ICBL is confident that the goal of no new use within ten years can be met. Any use of antipersonnel mines by anyone, anywhere, should receive quick and firm condemnation by all states until the norm is fully universalized.

Last year the United States took significant steps toward joining the Mine Ban Treaty by banning production and acquisition of antipersonnel mines, banning use except potentially in Korea, and accelerating stockpile destruction. All other states not yet party should also be making concrete steps toward joining the treaty.

We thank all states that vote in favor of the UNGA Resolution on the Mine Ban Treaty each year, in particular states not party that seize the opportunity to express their support for the humanitarian aim of addressing the suffering caused by landmines. About half the states not party vote in favor of the resolution each year. This year, we ask the others to please move closer to the treaty's objectives by voting in favor of the resolution: please be in the room for the vote and make your voice heard – there is no excuse in the XXIst Century for clinging to a weapon that makes civilians 75% of its victims.

Thank you.