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**CAMBODIA HOSTS MILESTONE INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN
THE BATTLE AGAINST LANDMINES**



(Phnom Penh, Monday 28 November 2011): Leading members of the international community are gathered in Cambodia – the cradle of the anti-landmine movement – to push for progress in reducing the harm antipersonnel landmines still cause.

The Eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty (11MSP) – which 80 per cent of countries have joined – begins today in Phnom Penh.

“My country is sometimes called the Country of Wonder, and this week we want you to make wonderful things happen,” said Cambodian landmine survivor Song Kosal, Youth Ambassador for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), at last night’s official opening ceremony.

“We want this meeting to be the best and most practical one yet in the convention’s history, and show how the international community is going to work together to make our dream of a mine free world a reality in our lifetime,” she added.

Representatives from many of the 158 governments that have joined the treaty are expected to attend, as well China, Lao PDR, United States, Vietnam, and other observer delegations from the 38 states that have not joined the treaty.

An ICBL delegation of more 270 campaigners from 61 countries, including dozens of landmine survivors, is participating in the meeting.

Already the 11MSP promises to begin with good news. On Friday 25 November the Finnish parliament approved a government proposal to join the Mine Ban Treaty in 2012. Poland, the only other European nation outside the treaty, is also on track to ratify in 2012.

“By meeting in Cambodia, the mine ban movement is returning to its roots,” said Kasia Derlicka, Director of the ICBL.

“Cambodia is one of the best examples we have of how far we have come in eradicating antipersonnel mines from the face of the earth, but it is an even more powerful reminder of how far we have to go.”

Cambodia is still one of the most mine-affected countries in the world, but an extensive mine action program established in 1992 has resulted in a dramatic decline in the number of new mine victims. Lives continue to be lost, however. There were at least 286 Cambodian mine, explosive remnants of war (ERW), and cluster munition remnants casualties in 2010.

The week-long Mine Ban Treaty meeting will review a range of treaty compliance issues, including the threat posed to the emerging norm by new landmine use in countries including Israel, Libya, and Myanmar (Burma).

Among the issues to be addressed by the meeting is news that five mine-affected states parties (Algeria, Chile, DR Congo, Republic of Congo, and Eritrea) have indicated they will not be able to complete clearance of their mined areas within the 10-year treaty-mandatory deadline, and have requested deadline extensions for the meeting to consider;

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Delegates will also discuss the fact that four States Parties (Belarus, Greece, Turkey and Ukraine) have missed their treaty-mandated four-year deadline for destroying their landmine stockpiles and are still in violation of the treaty.

ENDS

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REAL TIME UPDATES: Keep up to date with real time events from the meeting by following the ICBL on Twitter: www.twitter.com/@minefreeworld

IMAGES: For high resolution images from the conference and the global campaign, available to download for publication, visit the ICBL on Flickr: www.flickr.com/minefreeworld. Please credit images as shown.

STATEMENTS: For more information on the meeting, and to read / download all the ICBL's statements and daily updates, please visit <http://www.icbl.org/index.php/icbl/Treaty/MBT/Annual-Meetings/11msp>

GLOBAL COMMUNITY: ICBL Facebook: www.facebook.com/minefreeworld

Notes to editors

- For detailed information on the global landmine problem please visit the Landmine Monitor www.the-monitor.org
- For the official website for the meeting visit <http://www.apminebanconvention.org/?id=3618>
- Adopted in 1997, the Mine Ban Treaty entered into force on 1 March 1999. The treaty comprehensively bans all antipersonnel mines, requires destruction of stockpiled mines within four years, requires destruction of mines already in the ground within 10 years, and urges extensive programs to assist the victims of landmines.
- The International Campaign to Ban Landmines is a global network in over 90 countries, working for a world free of antipersonnel landmines. In 1997, the ICBL received the Nobel Peace Prize together with its founding coordinator Jody Williams for its efforts to bring about the Mine Ban Treaty.