

# Daily Update Thursday 3 December

Thursday, 3 November, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and anniversary of the signing of the MBT and the CCM, began a two-day high level segment with statements from over 30 senior government, international organization, NGO, and survivors representatives. Statements focused on successes achieved in the implementation of the MBT, but at the same time remained forward-focused and emphasized the need for commitment to further progress.

Reflecting back on the progress over the last five years, as country after country listed the steps they had taken along the way, the sense of the accomplishments of the MBT began to settle in, as statistic after statistic was provided on the number of mines cleared, the number of mines destroyed (over 44 million from stockpiles), the number of victim assistance initiatives undertaken, and the number of dollars contributed. More important were the number of statements with pledges of commitment to push forward in continuing work, in a broader scope under a new phase of implementation, ensuring synergies between the MBT, CPRD, and CCM - two instruments which have come into existence in large part due to the foundations set by the MBT and now stand in a position to build further on its impressive work.

Thematically, statements echoed calls to tackle the issue of use of mines by non-state armed groups, ensure fulfillment of clearance and stockpile destruction obligations, build national capacity, substantially increase victim assistance, and ensure the international cooperation necessary to achieve these goals. Many reaffirmed their commitments to meet extended Article 5 deadlines.

Notable amongst the many high level attendees were Princess Astrid of Belgium, Prince Mired of Jordan, and Vice President Fransisco Santos Calderon of Colombia, and from the ICBL, Nobel Laureate Jody Williams.

On implementation, a few statements stood out: the **Czech Republic** announced that it had reduced the number of its retained mines by half and reiterated its commitment that anti-vehicle mines with sensitive trip-wire fuzes cannot be used or transferred, clarifying it kept only a small quantity for training purposes, keeping with the 'spirit of Article 3.' **Jordan** stated that it pledged to clear all anti-personnel mines, as well as anti-vehicle mines and that it was 'bending over backwards to finish clearance as soon as possible'; **Panama and Nicaragua** called for a mine free Central America; and amid the numerous calls for universalization, **Palau** stated that it was a sign of hope that its 'paternal steward,' the USA was reviewing its policy on the MBT. **The Gambia** announced it submitted its long overdue initial Article 7 report, leaving only one outstanding initial report among States Parties.

A number of states referred to the critical role played by civil society and the partnership with governments, including **Canada, New Zealand, and Chile**, which said that it was no longer possible to conceive of the MBT process without civil society.

Others spoke about the connections between the MBT, mine action, and VA obligations with development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. **Guinea-Bissau** emphasized the importance of mine action as part of Poverty Reduction Strategies in order to pursue the MDGs, while **Bangladesh** said that achievements in the implementation of the MBT were crucial for the achievement of the MDGS, especially for the least developed countries. The **EU** stated that as mine action becomes part of States' development efforts, focus on mine action and aid effectiveness, as manifested in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, should take on a greater importance.

**Norway's** intervention focused on the relationship between the MBT and broader efforts to address armed violence. Armed violence causes fear and insecurity, undermines human rights, hinders development, tears social fabric apart, threatens peace and security, causes economic damage and is a serious threat to our common effort to meet the MDGs, Norway said. The MBT has laid framework to address one important form of armed violence that causes unacceptable harm to civilians and 10 years of implementation of the MBT has produced impressive results, Norway said, and has inspired promising new initiatives that will improve human security and the protection of civilians, during and after armed conflict world wide. The MBT has introduced a new way of thinking in humanitarian disarmament and victim assistance, as reflected in two new conventions, the CPRD and CCM. Norway stated that Cartagena has again demonstrated the partnerships that brought us to the achievements of the MBT and called for continued work on the challenges of armed violence in years ahead.

The **Philippines** referred to the side event it hosted together with the governments of Norway and Switzerland, on the nexus between armed violence and development and the MBT. The Ottawa community is a natural partner in efforts to work on armed violence and development, the Philippines said, and it hoped to further explore this issue in a meeting on the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development Meeting to be held in Manila later next year.

Survivors **Ken Rutherford, Margaret Arach Orech, and Prasanna Rajiv Kuruppu** read the ICBL Survivors' Call to Action, delivering also a powerful visual message, surrounded on stage by fellow survivors and campaigners. The statement covered concrete points of action to improve VA, calling on all to ratify the MBT, CPRD, and CCM; as well as to increase VA effectiveness by integration in national development plans, emphasizing in particular the importance of reaching survivors in remote areas. Prasanna then presented the survivors' call to President Susan Eckey.

**Jody Williams** spoke about the enduring vitality of the partnerships between governments and civil society in the continued success of the MBT, and reminded all that the MBT was not just about the pretty words and speeches heard today and to honor their commitments with actions, adding that the MBT movement has been pretty good at following pretty words with actions.

Eleven States reaffirmed their commitments to the CCM and gave updates on progress towards ratification.

**Colombia** stated it was in progress of ratification and had destroyed its stockpiles of cluster bombs. **Belgium** announced it was finalizing its ratification instrument and that the CCM provides, along with the MBT, a coherent legal basis against which an arsenal of force which can be used against the civilian population is banned. **The Gambia** was a bit vague and stated that its national assembly is ratifying all 'related legal instruments to landmines,' perhaps meaning the CCM.

**Spain** declared that it had prohibited cluster munition exports, imports, and destroyed its stockpiles, all before the entry into force of the CCM. Spain stated that its industry and armed forces incurred considerable costs, both economically and operationally, in carrying out these obligations, but that these costs are possible to overcome if there is true political will. Spain urged all to redouble their efforts.

**Albania** announced that it had ratified the CCM and that it had completed clearance of all cluster munitions affected areas - just last week!

**Chile** stated that its Chamber of Deputies has given unanimous approval of the ratification instrument of the CCM and it expected its second Chamber to do so soon, in order to have ratification completed by the time of the Santiago preparatory commission meeting before the first Meeting of States Parties. Chile endorsed Peru's initiative for a Latin American cluster munitions-free zone.

On behalf of the **Holy See**, the Archbishop of Cartagena delivered a powerful statement on VA and the MBT and CCM, saying that human beings must be the center of our concerns, that victim assistance to victims and their families must be the focus of our work, but asked how was it possible to draw distinctions between victims of landmines, cluster munitions, and small arms and light weapons or in clearance of the weapons? The defense of national interest must never be at the detriment of the civilian population, he said. Sandra Castro Zapata, Colombian mine survivor, then delivered a moving message from Pope Benedict XVI.

**Switzerland** expressed its hope for the entry into force of the CCM in 2010 to mark an important point in time in the struggle against ERW, calling for the generation of maximum synergies between the CCM and MBT and to put available resources to the best possible use. **Germany** likewise called for integrated implementation of the CCM, CPRD, and MBT, praising the higher standards of VA in the CCM. Germany announced that it will hold a national round table on VA, to create strategies on VA with civil society partners.

**Indonesia** referred to its role in promoting the CCM in hosting the recent Bali Conference and said it hoped to contribute to a world free of landmines and cluster munitions, while **Australia** noted it was proud to be amongst the first countries to sign the CCM.

The day concluded with a vibrant reception hosted by the government of Colombia, featuring a colorful Colombian carnival procession and lively Colombian dancing.

Side events included:

- The Governments of the Philippines, Switzerland and Norway, in partnership with UNDP, held a side-event briefing on synergies between the Mine Ban Treaty and efforts on armed violence. Presentations by the host highlighted the historical role of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, as well as profiling up-coming regional and international meetings in Manila and Oslo. A substantial crowd of mainly civil society participants contributed to a wide-ranging discussion - pressing for the need for better measurement, recognition of armed violence as a cross-cutting barrier to MDG attainment, potential for victim assistance in future instruments on armed violence and the importance of recognising the two-way relationship between armed violence and development. For more information contact [domingojs23@yahoo.com](mailto:domingojs23@yahoo.com) or [rmoyes@aoav.org.uk](mailto:rmoyes@aoav.org.uk)
- "The Middle East and North Africa: 10 years of mine action." The event was organized by PROTECTION and ICBL at Pegasus hall and was attended by 35 persons. Speakers included Mr. Ayman Sorour, who talked about MENA's mine ban policy, mine action, and security concerns related to landmines. This was followed by Ms. Sherin Dabbas who introduced the MENA section of HI recent report "Voices from the Ground." Dr. Raffat Misak gave a presentation on the environmental consequences of antipersonnel landmines stockpile destruction with case study of Kuwait. The event went for long time as of the many constructive questions from the audience continued. The attendees were very satisfied with the fact that such event and important subjects were discussed from MENA perspective at the second review conference and asked to keep and widen such events on MENA in the next MBT or CCM events. For more information contact Ayman Sorour at: [asorour@mena-protection.org](mailto:asorour@mena-protection.org)
- Canada hosted a Meeting of the Universalization Contact Group. It was attended by Australia, France, Holy See, Japan, Norway, and Palau as well as by the ICRC, ICBL and other NGOs. The group members have reported on actions on universalization they have undertaken in the past months and discussed strategies, priorities and plans for next year. Participants expressed need to involve more State Parties in universalization work in next year. Contact John MacBride at [john.macbride@international.gc.ca](mailto:john.macbride@international.gc.ca)
- Geneva Call presented its report "Integral Mine Action in Colombia" ([mbalci@genevacall.org](mailto:mbalci@genevacall.org))
- Belgium hosted a meeting of the Article 7 Contact Group - contact [philippe.bronchain@diplobel.fed.be](mailto:philippe.bronchain@diplobel.fed.be)
- And Colombian popstar Juanes led a discussion with Colombian landmine survivors about their stories of life and hope, hosted by Fundacion Mi Sangre. Survivors presented many concrete suggestions for improving assistance to victims through their personal stories, and were joined on the stage by Jody Williams towards the end of the meeting, who supported their calls and praised

Juanes for his engagement. For more information, contact  
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