

Setting Off on the Road to Cartagena

Thanks to the Mine Ban Treaty - and to the tireless work of committed governments, NGOs, partners and individuals engaged in mine action on a daily basis - 80% of the world's states have now formally renounced the use of these weapons, and only two governments are known to have used them in the past few years, with virtually no trade and severely reduced production worldwide.

Thanks to the treaty thousands of square kilometres of land have been cleared of landmines and other types of unexploded ordnance, and thousands more square kilometers of previously suspected mined areas have been released, making it safe for affected individuals and communities whose lives were shattered by conflict to go back to their daily life. In addition, tens of millions of stockpiled mines have been destroyed and landmine casualties are constantly decreasing.

And thanks to the example set by the "Ottawa process" more than a decade ago, governments and civil society came together again to put an end to the suffering caused by cluster munitions, leading to the signature in December 2008 of the Convention banning these weapons.

At the end of this year, all of us working towards the ambitious goal of a world free of antipersonnel mines and the suffering they cause will meet in Cartagena, Colombia, for the treaty's Second Review Conference. This will provide us with an opportunity to assess the success and setbacks so far, and to identify the obstacles that still stand in the way of a world where the Mine Ban Treaty is universally adhered to and implemented, with all stockpiles destroyed, all known mined areas cleared, and the physical rehabilitation and socio-economic inclusion of landmine survivors ensured.

As we set off on the road to Cartagena, we will continue to seek solutions to the outstanding challenges and encourage states to address them vigorously and in good faith. We will also work to ensure that the voice of civil society remains strong as long as needed.

For this we can count on the energy and commitment of a network that is as strong as ever, where new enthusiastic campaigners stand shoulder to shoulder with experienced mine activists, researchers, and mine action practitioners, all sharing the determination to build on the Mine Ban Treaty's past successes until a mine-free world is achieved.

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