

Opening Statement

17th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
26 November 2018



Delivered by Mr Jesus Martinez,
Founder of the Network of Landmine Survivors of El Salvador

The Mine Ban Treaty, a ground-breaking multilateral instrument at the start, is becoming a world-wide norm and a universally accepted law. As a campaigner of the ICBL, a survivor, a abilities, I see that universalization, clearance, and victim assistance remain our key concerns.

The 32 states not yet party to the Treaty are keeping the option open to use antipersonnel landmines despite their indiscriminate and disproportionate effects. I don't see how it is possible to defend them given the obvious humanitarian harm they have caused, generating so many thousands of victims, mostly civilians in so many countries.

These anomalies stand in stark contrast with the respect for life and dignity that all nations must hold dear. Men, women, and children should not have to endure a world where these weapons continue cutting down people's hopes and dreams.

Landmines should be eradicated. We have already achieved their prohibition and their stigmatization, now let's make it to their complete ban and elimination by every nation.

We have the collective aspiration of achieving a mine-free 2025 in as many states as possible. Even those who doubt we can make it in this timeframe must realize that we have to continue working to achieve it, with passion, commitment, and in solidarity. Only in this way we will be able to reach December 2025 with pride for having done our utmost!

Those of us who have experienced the devastating effects of landmines call on you to make a mine-free world a reality, where the rights and needs of all victims are fulfilled!

Yes, there are still obstacles to achieving a mine-free world. But we, the survivors, have brought down all types of barriers to move on with our lives, and we will never cease fighting for our rights and dreams, for our families and communities. We fought for this treaty, we saw the majority of the world make it happen in togetherness. Often, we still need to fight to be recognized as equal citizens, women and men, with full rights. Yet we have the strength and the will to see this process through.

Let us recognize that there is a life behind every word stated here this week. It is not enough to deliver statements, to sign treaties, or to write reparative laws. These must be fulfilled and implemented, not languish for a lack of resources or institutional capacities.

Do whatever it takes to guarantee our rights, as established in the Mine Ban Treaty and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities! Link any and all efforts on victim assistance with the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals to make these efforts a unified force for change!

We will continue working with you, at the national and international levels to successfully meet the 2025 aspiration, and to ensure that assistance to victims continues into a sustainable future. We will also make sure to remain a critical but constructive voice helping to safeguard the people's treaty, the Mine Ban Treaty!

Thank you.