Clearing mined areas (continued from 29 November)
The discussion on clearance continued and the remaining States Parties that were previously granted clearance deadline extensions, Mozambique, Venezuela, Yemen, Senegal, Peru, Ecuador, Mauritania, Thailand, Croatia, UK, Argentina, Cambodia, Tajikistan, and Colombia provided updates on the progress of their clearance activities.

Mozambique provided details of survey completed and ongoing, clearance carried out, the scope of the remaining areas to be cleared, and informed the MSP that additional mechanical and land release capabilities have been incorporated into demining operations. Mozambique also reported that mined areas on the border with Zimbabwe need to be cleared through joint efforts, and indicated that cooperation was being initiated. Mozambique told delegates that it was committed to finish clearance within its extended deadline of 1 March 2014.

Venezuela, with an extended deadline of 1 October 2014, reported that it brought in a team with mechanical assets to conduct clearance, but also that flooding has hampered clearance in some areas with the result that it has not been able to fulfil objectives as planned. Venezuela plans to study mine fields located in flood plains during the dry season in March, May and June 2012. Venezuela told delegates that it remained committed to clearance tasks.

Yemen, with an extended deadline of 1 March 2015, reported that clearance in 2011 fell short of planned objectives due to lack of support and security problems. Yemen noted that contributions have ceased over the past three years with the exception of two remaining donors—the US and Germany.

Senegal, with an extended deadline of 1 March 2016, reported on institutional developments in its clearance program over the past year, including the development of a strategic operational communication plan, and the establishment of a specialized anti-mine organization. Senegal reported that it has been able to employ a Digger machine with EU support, that 92 areas have been recommended for release after non-technical survey, and that survey continues. Senegal noted that it faces several challenges to completion of clearance obligations, including conflict and vegetation density. Senegal announced that, following on from successful collaboration with NPA, it is looking to recruit other operators to reinforce its demining capacity. Senegal also reported in detail on the RE activities that have taken place since its last update.

Peru, with an extended deadline of 1 March 2017, gave a detailed statement on its clearance activities on the contaminated area on the border with Ecuador (on which it collaborated with Ecuador), and around several prisons and police bases (where it has successfully introduced land release methods). Peru noted that its clearance capacity has increased and become much more efficient in comparison to its past performance,
however it signalled that US support is coming to an end in two months and stated that it will need new bilateral relations in order to continue making progress in meeting clearance obligations.

**Ecuador**, with an extended deadline of 1 October 2017, reported that it has successfully completed all clearance objectives for the current year and that it has also completed the majority of the objectives that were scheduled to be completed in the coming two years. Ecuador noted that lack of funding is a challenge and that it provides nearly all of the required mine action funding domestically.

**Mauritania**, with an extended deadline of 1 January 2016, reported that it cleared four times the area it planned to in 2011, and requested additional support.

**Thailand** reported that it is confident it will meet its extended deadline of 1 November 2018. It stated that it has revised its strategy to include: exploring new methods of clearance; intensifying fundraising; expanding partnerships, especially with NGOs; and enhancing cooperation with neighbouring countries. It gave examples of various activities in these areas, such as the incorporation of land release into Thailand’s national mine action standards and a visit to Cambodia to share experience.

**Croatia**, with an extended deadline of 1 November 2018, gave details of clearance, funding for clearance, and RE activities. Croatia stated that it provided the majority (86%) of mine action funds domestically. Croatia reported that it has achieved extraordinary results in reducing hazardous areas by employing air-born survey methods and invited any interested states to request further information about their experience with this method.

The **UK**, with an extended deadline of 1 March 2019, reported that the second phase of clearance project in the Falkland Islands, which will include land release methods, will be carried out from January 2012 to March 2012. The UK stated that mined areas in the Falkland Islands are marked, have a low impact on communities, and are costly to clear due to geography and climate. The **UK** stated that it would continue to focus on demining that has “humanitarian impact.”

**Argentina**, took the floor to assert its sovereignty over the disputed territory the Falkland Islands/Malvinas.

**Cambodia**, reported that its baseline survey Phase One is now complete, Phase Two is nearing completion, and Phase Three is due to begin in January 2012. It noted that completion of the third phase would depend on funding availability. Cambodia explained that it would use the results of the baseline survey, in addition to information provided by operators and affected communities to prioritize highly impacted communities for clearance. Cambodia noted that land release standards were approved in 2011, with one operator commencing application of this method in May, resulting in a 40% increase in productivity. Cambodia reported on a three-day regional workshop for 22 countries, organized with support of GICHD. Cambodia stated that continued support will ensure that it will be able to meet its extended deadline of 1 January 2020.

**Tajikistan**, with an extended deadline of 1 April 2020, provided detailed information on its clearance capacity, the remaining contaminated areas, and the financial and material
it received. It outlined difficulties it experienced in using mechanical assets for clearance, and shared revised plans, which include using mechanical clearance in addition to other types of clearance, rather than using it alone as originally planned. Tajikistan stated that it intends to begin clearance of mined areas on its side of the border with Uzbekistan, though the two countries have not been in contact regarding this issue.

Colombia, with an extended deadline of 1 March 2021, reported that a meeting will take place on 9 December to approve standards which will allow the accreditation of NGOs to enable them to carry out mine clearance in Colombia, a development that Colombia is confident will strengthen its clearance capacity. It gave details of the system it will use to classify different types of mined areas, noting that NGOs will only be authorized to clear zones designated as “humanitarian.” Colombia gave an example of South to South cooperation in which Colombian civil servants visited the CMAA in Cambodia to gain experience.

The ICBL then took the opportunity offered by the 11MSP President to respond to the preceding statements in the session on mine clearance. The ICBL thanked Nigeria for its formal declaration that it had completed clearance obligations, and encouraged Burundi to also submit a formal declaration of compliance with Article 5. The ICBL then provided a detailed response covering all State Parties with extended deadlines that presented an update, noting with concern that only one state with an extension has completed clearance, and that 14 of 22 States Parties with extended deadlines are not on track to meet them. The ICBL lamented the absence Bosnia and Herzegovina, the only State Party with an extended deadline that was not present to provide an update.

The ICBL condemned the statement by the UK, pointing out upon being granted an extension, the UK committed to completing all clearance within 10 years, regardless of the impact of the mines remaining to be cleared, and reminding States Parties that the UK agreed to submit a detailed clearance plan by June 2010, which is still outstanding. The ICBL noted that for a second year in a row, no clearance is planned to take place in the Falkland Islands, leaving the UK less than seven years to complete clearance of 110 mined areas across over 7 km².

The ICBL reminded States Parties that Article 5 calls for clearance as soon as possible and urged all States Parties not to wait for their deadline to complete clearance. The ICBL also reminded states that the Mine Ban Treaty does not encompass the concept of “impact-free,” meaning that all mined areas must be cleared, regardless of their impact, and also reminded States Parties that the treaty requires them to make every effort to identify any contaminated area under their control.

Afghanistan then took the floor to announce that it is working on a detailed request to extend its 1 March 2013 deadline, and requested further funding to strengthen its capacity.

Informal session: Reflecting on two decades of efforts to end the suffering and casualties caused by antipersonnel mines

In the afternoon, the 11MSP President introduced an informal session with Chris Moon and Song Kosal as the Masters of Ceremonies. The session looked back on the past 20 years of the mine ban movement, celebrated the achievements and progress toward a mine-free world and reminded delegates of the human face of the Mine Ban Treaty.
Chris Moon reminded the plenary that the Mine Ban Treaty is based on the principle that even in conflict we must remember our humanity and Song Kosal heralded the landmine movement as an important partnership between governments and civil society which makes a difference in the lives of people in mine affected areas.

Survivors, including from the Arrupe Centre in Battambang, took the stage to present an evocative performance reflecting the effect of landmines on Cambodia over many decades. Through a traditional Khmer song and dance the survivors and performers blessed the plenary with peace.

Chris Moon traced the development of the mine ban movement over the past 20 years, from its origins in the publication of *The Coward's War* by Human Rights Watch and Physicians for Human Rights.

In a video message, Jody Williams reflected on the power of civil society when people believe they have the right and responsibility to bring about change. She heralded the mine ban movement as an example which has been replicated in related initiatives such as the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Head of the ICRC Regional Delegation in Bangkok Jack Straw recounted his early experiences of the cruelty of landmines and their impact on civilians in El Salvador. He traced the evolution of the ICRC’s work on antipersonnel landmines over the last twenty years, including the ICRC’s call for a total ban on anti-personnel landmines in 1994.

Tun Channareth reflected on the obstacles on the road to the successful negotiation of the Mine Ban Treaty.

The Cambodian Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Bombs distributed its publication on these early years of the mine ban movement, entitled *Ambassadors Before They Knew It*, to the delegations.

Sylvie Brigot of the ICBL and Paul Hannon of Mines Action Canada took the stage to display the 1997 Nobel Peace Price awarded to the ICBL and Jody Williams.

Steve Goose, the ICBL’s Head of Delegation, and John MacBride, Canada’s Head of Delegation at the 11MSP shared their reflections on the Ottawa process and the lessons from it which remain important today.

Steve Goose heralded the Ottawa process as a form of new diplomacy, in which civil society set the agenda and served as the driving force, noting the great importance of personal commitment by campaigners and the coalition.

John McBride reflected on three unique characteristics of the Ottawa process: the fast-track treaty process, the partnership between civil society and government, and the diplomatic process involving a coalition of like-minded states. He urged the plenary to consider the Ottawa process not at an end until there are no new victims of mines and there is adequate support and opportunities for all landmine survivors.
Elias Zimba from Mozambique’s delegation and Susan Walker from the ICBL shared their memories of the First MSP in Mozambique in 1999. They heralded the innovative creation of the intersessional work program and the publication of the first Landmine Monitor report as two of the many groundbreaking achievements of the mine ban movement. Both urged States Parties to maintain the spirit and energy of the movement as it faces the tasks of the future.

Three graduates from the Raising the Voices leadership and advocacy training programme, Margaret Arach Orech from Uganda, Jésus Martinez from El Salvador and Prasanna Rajiv Kuruppu from Sri Lanka, took the stage. Margaret told the plenary that inclusion of victims remains an integral part of the Mine Ban Treaty because it gives a human face to what the treaty is all about: human lives at stake. She reminded delegates that survivors are best placed to make decisions regarding the issues which affect them, and that since they have survived they can help others to survive too. Jésus told delegates that survivors would continue to press for provision of victim assistance, and reminded states that while laws are important, laws must be backed up by resources required to put them into practice so that they may have a real impact on survivors’ lives. Prasanna spoke of the importance of inclusiveness, equality and progress on the ground.

Sherie Bailey, victim assistance specialist spoke of the importance of understanding victim assistance as involving far more than just medical and rehabilitation issues, and stressed that victim assistance is not about providing charity but about empowering survivors and allowing them equal access to opportunities. She advised that sustainability is crucial to fulfil the treaty’s promise to survivors, noting that victim assistance will be required long after the end of clearance activities. She urged states to integrate victim assistance into broader disability frameworks.

Tim Horner from UNDP recalled his early demining work in Somalia in 1992 and reflected that victim assistance has evolved from the sphere of emergency response to that of development. He stressed the importance of a holistic approach to mine action. UNDP sees all pillars of mine action as contributions to economic recovery in post-conflict countries and encourages the integration of mine action into national development and reconstruction plans.

In introducing Cambodian deminers from four demining agencies to the plenary, Chris Moon recalled Einstein’s reflection that our humanity has not advanced as fast as our technology, and observed that the Mine Ban Treaty process is about humanity catching up.

One of Cambodia’s longest serving deminers, Pen Vanny, a CMAC Platoon Commander, and one of Cambodia’s most recently qualified deminers, Chanthu Khem, a MAG deminer in Battambang Province shared their experience of demining with delegates, telling of pride in seeing former contaminated areas be transformed into rice fields, and expressing gratitude to organizations and donors that have supported clearance in Cambodia.

Alexander Kmentt of Austria spoke about the 2004 Nairobi Summit in Kenya and the ‘Road to Nairobi’ communication strategy which preceded and generated momentum for the summit.
**Daniel Ávila of Colombia** spoke about the 2009 Second Review Conference in Cartagena and its importance as an opportunity for the international community to reiterate its commitment to Mine Ban Treaty. He reflected on the success of the Cartagena Action Plan, adopted at the conference, but urged states not to view Cartagena as the end of the road but rather as the start of a new journey committed to implementing the new action plan with renewed energy.

The focus of the informal session turned to the future as youth from 32 countries participating in Mines Action Canada’s Youth Leaders Forum took the stage. Youth representatives, Nyambura Christine Gichuki from Kenya and Kamran Khan from Pakistan called on the plenary to remember that the decisions made in the room and the actions taken outside the room affect real people in affected communities. They told delegates that they were there to provide new energy to the movement, and shared the dream that in their lifetimes they would see the last stockpile destroyed, the last community unable to farm its land, and the last new landmine victim.

The 11MSP President then called upon the delegates of the 11MSP to share their own reflections on the lessons learned in the past two decades of the mine ban movement.

Executive Director of the ICBL, Sylvie Brigot highlighted some important challenges that still remain in fully implementing the Mine Ban Treaty. She pushed for the partnership between states, civil society, the ICRC and the UN to remain at the heart of daily work on the treaty, and pointed out that this positive model of partnership has been replicated in the creation of other instruments which protect civilians, including the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

**Brazil** warned against allowing clearance deadline extension requests to become a routine procedure and acknowledged the need to address the situation of States Parties discovering new mined areas after declaring Article 5 obligations complete, a situation which unforeseen when the treaty was negotiated. **Brazil** also urged States Parties to view the Mine Ban Treaty in a larger perspective, acknowledging the multiple challenges faced by mine-affected states in the developing world.

**Norway** stressed the need for increased and strong national ownership of mine action and for a more accurate understanding of the actual extent of the mine problem as a prerequisite for planning and resource management.

**Prince Mired of Jordan**, Special Envoy on Universalization, told the plenary that working on the Mine Ban Treaty has been one of the most rewarding and challenging experiences of his life. He spoke frankly and passionately about many aspects of the treaty, praising the magnificent work of the “giants of the past”, but telling delegates that they must increase the passion and commitment, not just in the conference hall but in the field. He spoke of the importance of national ownership, expressed his support for the Implementation Support Unit and stated his concern that support for the ISU is lagging, when it should be increasing, allowing it to continue and deepen its important work. He urged States Parties to push, at a high level, for universalization, as he believes that such an effort would be rewarded with success. Finally he told states that he does not understand why the private sector is not more involved in supporting the work of the treaty and called for increased corporate engagement.
Belgium was the last to speak, calling on states to consider engaging with regional organizations, such as ASEAN and CARICOM, or other structures, such as the European Parliament, in an effort to make progress in universalizing and implementing the treaty. He echoed Prince Mired’s call for engagement with the private sector, including sponsorship, investment, public-private-partnerships, and development of new technologies with the involvement of the corporate sector.