

**Statement on Renewing Political Commitment (High Level)
Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Mine
Ban Treaty, Oslo, 25-29 November 2019**



Mr. President, Excellencies, Friends,

Happy 20th anniversary of the Mine Ban Treaty becoming International Law!

25 years ago, with three other landmine survivors, I wrote a letter.

“Before, we were soldiers who laid mines that blew off the arms and eyes and legs of one another. Now, we work together – making wheelchairs, training other disabled, and reaching out to remote survivors.

We beg the world

- to ban landmines; **stop making, laying, and selling mines!**
- to clear mines
- to help the victims”

Back then we did not know who to beg to. We just knew governments and businesses and armies made and laid the mines and we had lost our legs!

The ICBL called us to talk to the United Nations. So in Vienna, in 1995, we urged strong political commitment to ban mines. A few governments were already on board, and the ICRC was our strong ally.

Religious leaders, royals, artists, doctors, deminers, and people in the streets – all advocated for the ban. Journalists spread the word. Led by the ICBL, our amazing civil society movement grew and our dream turned into the Ottawa Treaty to Ban Landmines. We believe this is the most successful disarmament and humanitarian treaty ever!

This week, at this 20-year review conference, we promise again to do all we can to ensure the treaty continues to deliver its promises. The ICBL will not go away until the job is done!!! A strong ambitious OSLO Action Plan paves the way!

We cannot do it alone. The outstanding alliance created between civil society, States Parties, the ICRC, and the UN to forge the Ottawa Treaty must stand firm until the job is done.

Today, we urge you to

- Commit to the implementation of a robust OSLO Action Plan that moves firmly to the 2025 completion goal;
- Set up good machinery to deal with implementation and compliance issues and facilitate effective actions on the ground;
- Remember the three pillars of the Treaty – the universal ban, land clearance, and quality of life and rights for affected people;

Our Landmine Monitor Team has issued a comprehensive report on the state of the Treaty every year since 1999. This year, it tells us some good news:

- The stigma against landmines remains strong
- Global funding for mine action is at one of the highest levels
- Some thirty States Parties have completed clearance since the Mine Ban Treaty entered into force in 1999
- Survivors have played important roles in assisting their peers.

But there is also alarming news:

- Last year, close to 7000 people were killed or injured by landmines, including improvised mines! This is almost twice as many as before the Maputo Review Conference! Some 20 casualties per day! **Imagine if your child is one of those 20!**
- Landmines continue to be used by the government of Myanmar, and by non-state armed groups in at least five countries (Afghanistan, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Yemen)
- The pace of land clearance is still too slow – globally states cleared fifty-five km² less than what was estimated. No single state completed clearance in 2018 and most affected states are not on track to meet their current clearance deadlines
- The need for assisting victims remains great. Services for survivors in remote areas are often inadequate, inaccessible, or non-existent.

With these challenges – it is too early to rest. We call on you – on champions old and new – to be bold and creative this week and further in implementing our Treaty and its OSLO Action Plan.

I cry when I hear of new casualties, nearly 7000 more! We need to reach out to survivors in remote areas, so their rights are upheld, needs met, and voices heard!

The ICBL is tired of countries that act like caterpillars in getting their clearance done. We need to finish the clearance job by 2025. Let the OSLO action plan make it a reality, with your political commitment and generous funding.

2025 is only five years away. Let's move with determination, compassion, and courage to finish the job. Together.

Thank you!