

Meetings/Seminars

- A Landmine Monitor (LM) Researchers Meeting was held in Oslo, Norway, March 1-4. LM is a civil-society based, treaty surveillance mechanism designed to independently monitor country activities as they relate to all aspects of the Ottawa Convention. The main purpose of the meeting was to allow independent, country-based researchers to present their findings and submit their research to peer review. The meeting was also the final preparatory stage for the first annual LM report which will be released at the First Meeting of States Parties in Maputo in May 1999. The meeting was attended by over 75 country-researchers, academics and representatives from organizations that form the Landmine Monitor Core Group: Human Rights Watch, Handicap International, Norwegian People's Aid, Mines Action Canada and the Kenyan Coalition Against Landmines. Representatives from the governments of Austria, Belgium, Canada, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and the U.K. were also in attendance.

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

- Researchers from the Middle East and the Commonwealth of Independent States had a strong presence at the meeting, both in terms of numbers and the quality of reports delivered.
- Participants heard an important presentation by Susan Bensch of the Yale University International Human Rights Clinic who argued that the Ottawa Treaty is on its way to becoming international *customary* law and as this happens the total norm will become binding on all states, even those that have not signed.
- LM received welcome news about an expanded donor base as representatives from the Netherlands and the U.K. made funding announcements

3. Upcoming Events

- Ottawa, Canada (April 6, 1999) - A delegation from the Ukraine will meet with officials in Ottawa to discuss stockpile destruction as well as Canada's observations/recommendations vis a vis existing or proven demilitarisation technologies.
- Managua, Nicaragua (April 11-12, 1999) - Central America Landmine and OAS Conference
- Maputo, Mozambique (May 3-7, 1999) - First Meeting of States Parties of the Ban Convention NOTE: Drafts of the proposed Programme, Agenda and other pertinent meeting information will soon be available for viewing on *SafeLane* Web site.
- Maputo, Mozambique (May 8-9, 1999) - International Campaign to Ban Landmines General Assembly