

"TOWARDS A GLOBAL BAN ON ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES": INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY CONFERENCE

From October 3-5, 1996, representatives of approximately 70 governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international humanitarian agencies, will gather in Ottawa for the first International Strategy Conference on anti-personnel mines (AP mines).

Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, will host the Conference, which is being organized by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) with the assistance of Mines Action Canada, a national coalition of NGOs affiliated with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. Governments attending the Conference will be represented by senior officials and the sessions will be chaired by a senior official of DFAIT.

Among other objectives, the conference is expected to:

- provide a focal point for international action on the AP mines issue;
- develop political direction to the increasing momentum for a ban on AP mines;
- promote the integration of AP mines clearance and victim assistance measures in ban initiatives; and
- endorse the Ottawa Declaration, which sets out common concerns and goals for achieving a global ban.

Countries attending the conference as full participants are "self-selected" in that they support the objectives of the Conference and are willing to subscribe to various actions to achieve those objectives. Those countries which are not yet ready to support a global ban on AP mines have been invited to attend as observers.

Government representatives, working in closed sessions, will negotiate the terms of the Ottawa Declaration. They will also announce a Plan of Action which will propose, among other measures, a series of follow-up international and regional conferences.

October 1996