

Six months after ratification, a state becomes party to the Convention. The Entry into Force takes effect six months after 40 states have ratified it. At that time, states parties will have the duty to support mine clearance and give assistance to landmine victims in accordance with the Convention's provisions. This is followed by a formal reporting obligation after 180 days in accordance with Article 7. Within four years, states must destroy all stockpiled anti-personnel mines. Within ten years, all emplaced anti-personnel mines must be destroyed or the state must submit a request for an extension to the United Nations.

The International Committee for the Red Cross has produced a layperson's guide to the Convention which is aimed at non-legal specialists. It is currently available in English only, but will be available next year in the other official UN languages.

### ***Country Campaign Perspective***

Ms. Nicoletta Dentico  
*Coordinator, Italian Campaign to Ban Landmines*

Italy may ratify the Convention requiring a global ban on landmines as early as April 1998. But Nicoletta Dentico of the Italian Campaign to Ban Landmines said she will press for even faster ratification.

Dentico urged participants to push their governments to ratify the Convention immediately. Italy is one of six countries which have passed legislation banning landmines, giving Italians an additional reason to push for immediate ratification. She said government representatives had told her today they would ratify the treaty as soon as possible — in three or four months, once budget discussions are completed. Dentico urged Italy's Prime Minister to make ratification happen even sooner.

Dentico noted the signing of the treaty is not the end-game. It is the beginning of the ratification process, which requires that 40 countries ratify the treaty before it becomes a binding reality. One example to be avoided is the Inhumane Weapons Convention, which was signed in 1980 but ratified by only six countries by December 1994. Fortunately, pressure from national campaigns revived commitment and 57 countries had ratified the Convention by 1995.

Cooperation between governments and national campaigns has improved remarkably since then, Dentico said. She urged other national campaigns not to allow the complexity of the ratification process to slow things down. The Italian campaign will urge its government to press for early endorsement among other leading European nations.

### ***Campaigning for Ratification***

Mr. Nigel Fisher  
*Director, Emergency Programmes, UNICEF*

Sustaining momentum and political will on a national and global level is essential to effective action on banning landmines, said Nigel Fisher of UNICEF.

Fisher says the near-universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child offers some suggestions for pursuing rapid ratification of the Ban Convention. Sustained momentum, mobilization of national political will, and acceleration of regional and global action are all essential for success.

Now that the Nobel peace prize has been awarded to the ICBL, Fisher recommended that the Campaign take advantage of this opportunity by making high-profile visits to both signatory and recalcitrant countries, and by urging everyone from parliamentarians to school children to keep public pressure on governments. UNICEF representatives have been urged to work with NGOs, religious leaders and government representatives in their countries to press for early ratification. Fisher stressed the need to build relations with key people in the appropriate government ministries, which will differ from one state to the next. UNICEF is also working with regional intergovernmental bodies such as the OAU, the Arab League and the OAS to introduce resolutions at their regional conferences that support a total ban. Religious leaders are another important group of supporters to mobilize to lobby national governments. UNICEF will work to renew its alliance with the interfaith World Conference to promote ratification. Fisher noted that a special strategy is needed to engage the munitions industry.

Fisher also recommended that the alliance work with countries such as South Africa, which are opinion leaders and can influence a number of others to take action.