

# THE Managua Challenge

RIDDING THE AMERICAS OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES

When a convention banning anti-personnel mines (APMs) was opened for signature at a conference in Ottawa in 1997, it inspired great hopes. At last the world had an effective tool; now it could tackle the problem and make a real difference to people in mine-affected communities.

The countries of the Americas have taken a lead in fulfilling those hopes. Even before the 1997 conference, Central and South American states pledged to make the Hemisphere mine-free. Today, 33 out of 35 states in the region have signed the Ottawa Convention and 27 have ratified it, formally agreeing to ban APM use, stockpiling, production and transfer.

Less than four years later, the Convention is making a difference around the world and here in the Americas. In the countries most affected by mines, casualty rates have fallen. Also declining are global production, export and trade in APMs. Over 22 million mines have been destroyed by more than 50 countries. And anti-personnel mines are being removed from the ground faster than they are being planted.

Throughout the Americas, countries are clearing mines, destroying stockpiles, assisting victims and promoting mine awareness. By addressing local mine action needs, they are moving the entire region closer to meeting its pledge.

This coming September, the Nicaraguan capital of Managua will host the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention. Issued in the run-up to the event, the "Managua Challenge" seeks to

speed implementation of the Ottawa Convention in the Americas.

The Managua meeting will focus the eyes of the world on the Americas. The Challenge seizes on that moment, calling on signatory countries of the region to take dramatic steps by September:

- to complete ratification of the Convention if they have not yet done so;
- to complete all Convention Article 7 transparency reports; and
- to completely destroy their APM stockpiles.



Drawing on the \$100 million Canadian Landmine Fund and other resources, Canada is helping the states of the Americas fulfil their Convention obligations and rise to the Managua Challenge.

Together, we are making measurable progress toward a world free from the threat of anti-personnel mines. And the Americas are well on their way to becoming the world's first APM-free hemisphere. ●



Mine clearance returns land to safe and productive use, and builds confidence between countries. Canada provides Canadian-made protective gear for the clearance of the Peru-Ecuador border.

Assistance programs in the Americas help meet the immediate and long-term needs of mine victims, from initial emergency treatment to social and economic rehabilitation. Among programs to which Canada contributes is this prosthetics clinic in Nicaragua.



A key to preventing the spread of mines is destroying stockpiles—a technically complex task. Canada has completed destroying its stockpile and offers technical support to help other Ottawa Convention signatories do the same. In 2000, Canada provided technical advice to Honduras for destruction of its mine stockpiles, pictured here.

Just released! *Measured Steps: The Global Movement to Ban Landmines* is a 17-minute video on the global movement to ban anti-personnel mines. Created primarily by DFAIT for a Canadian youth audience, the Canada-focussed primer offers an overview of the problem, a history of the diplomatic efforts culminating in the Ottawa Convention, a look at current mine action and points on what viewers can do.

The video is available in English or French in VHS format. For a free copy, contact DFAIT's Enquiries Services, tel. 1-800-267-8376 (toll-free) or (613) 944-4000 (National Capital Region), fax (613) 996-9709, e-mail: [enqserv@dfait-maeci.gc.ca](mailto:enqserv@dfait-maeci.gc.ca)