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Adrian Brooks/CRC

(Left) A Cambodian boy near a known mined area.

(Right) A landmine survivor in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan learns to walk on her new prosthesis.

AP mines continue to injure and kill indiscriminately. Mines, and the fear of mines, prevent the safe and productive use of land, roads and other infrastructure, posing a serious obstacle to the delivery of humanitarian aid, the safe return of refugees, post-conflict reconstruction and sustainable development.

The stark humanitarian impact of AP mines outweighs their marginal military utility. AP mines have been proven to be of limited use to militaries, yet their impact on millions of civilian lives and the broader socio-economic well-being of entire countries is far-reaching.

The Ottawa Convention

Revulsion at this human-made problem, and the view that there was an achievable solution, sparked an international movement to ban AP mines in the early 1990s. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) carrying out development assistance in countries such as Cambodia, Afghanistan and Mozambique saw their efforts and those of local people being thwarted by

the persistent mine threat. Reconstruction and development were being stymied by wide-spread critical injuries and mine-infested land and infrastructure.

In 1992, a coalition of NGOs formed the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), and a more coordinated movement to ban AP mines, clear mined land and assist landmine victims was launched. This movement was later joined by states, including Canada. The resulting state-civil society partnership, and a unique form of fast-track diplomacy initiated by Canada in 1996, became known as the Ottawa Process. The result was the successful negotiation in 1997 of the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction*, the Ottawa Convention.

The Ottawa Convention is unique in that it sets out both a comprehensive ban on a weapon that has been in common use for generations and a set of steps that must be undertaken to address the human suffering it causes.