

Seeds of Hope

The Ottawa Process and the international movement to ban landmines

Revulsion at the appalling human effects of landmines was the driving force behind the launching of the Ottawa Process—an unprecedented, fast-track diplomatic initiative that, in only 14 months, negotiated 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 Process brought together like-minded governments, pro-ban non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations (IOs) into an effective “coalition of the willing” to push for the ban convention. Their efforts came to fruition in December 1997 when the world witnessed 122 states signing the ban convention at the Ottawa ceremony.

Foreign Affairs
Minister Lloyd
Axworthy and ICBL
Ambassador Jody
Williams in Oslo for
final negotiations
on the ban
convention text.

The Canadian commitment

In addition to its diplomatic leadership in pursuing the ban, Canada took early steps to meet its own commitments. Just a month before the treaty signing ceremony, Canada

demonstrated its support for the principles of the Convention by completing the destruction of almost all of its anti-personnel landmine stocks. As provided for by the treaty, Canada has retained a small number of AP mines solely for mine awareness and demining training purposes.

Canada was the first country to ratify the AP Mine Ban Convention, depositing its instruments of ratification with the Secretary General of the United Nations on the day the Convention was opened for signature. As part of the ratification process, Canada has passed domestic legislation which makes it illegal for any Canadian to produce, use, transfer or possess AP mines.

Canada backed its commitment to the goals of the Ottawa Convention financially in December 1997 when Prime Minister Jean Chrétien announced the establishment

