

LAND MINES AND THE CCW REVIEW CONFERENCE

The first Review Conference for the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) was held in Vienna in September 1995. During the course of the 3 week meeting, the Review Conference adopted a fourth protocol for the CCW which prohibits the use and transfer of blinding laser weapons. However, the Review Conference was unable to agree on changes to Protocol II of the CCW which deals with land mines, booby-traps and other devices. In response to a suggestion from Canada, the Review Conference held two additional sessions in January and April-May 1996 to complete negotiations on Protocol II.

A revised Protocol II was adopted on May 3, 1996, in Geneva and will place significant new prohibitions and restrictions on the use of land mines, in particular anti-personnel land mines (APM). Specifically, the revised Protocol will:

- apply to non-international armed conflicts;
- establish minimum technical standards to make all APM detectable and to eliminate the use of "dumb" mines outside of marked and monitored areas;
- place restrictions and prohibitions on the transfer and export of mines;
- enhance the protection of peacekeepers, humanitarian workers and mine clearance personnel; and
- include provisions on compliance with the Protocol.

Progress toward meeting these new standards will be reviewed on an annual basis at a meeting of states parties.

Recognizing the gravity of the humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions of the global land mine crisis, on January 17, 1996, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and National Defence announced a comprehensive unilateral moratorium on the production, export and operational use of APM.

Notwithstanding the progress made at the CCW Review Conference, Canada believes that much more needs to be done. In particular, Canada is working with other like-minded states and Canadian and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to promote a rapidly growing international campaign seeking a comprehensive global ban on APM. In total, some 69 states now support the concept of a global ban on these types of mines.

Canada is co-sponsoring a resolution at the UN General Assembly calling on member states to implement bans and moratoria on the production, export and operational use of APM as steps towards the complete elimination of these types of mines. In June 1996 at the General Assembly of the Organization of American