



BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA IV CONFERENZA DEGLI STATI PARTE ALLA CONVENZIONE SULLA INTERDIZIONE DELLE MINE ANTIUOMO (GINEVRA, 16-20 SETTEMBRE 2002)

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Dal 16 al 20 settembre 2002 si svolge a Ginevra la IV Conferenza degli Stati Parte alla Convenzione sulla interdizione delle mine antiuomo.

Riportiamo di seguito l'intervento pronunciato il 17 settembre u.s. da S.E. Mons. Diarmuid Martin, Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Ufficio delle Nazioni Unite ed Istituzioni Specializzate a Ginevra:

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. DIARMUID MARTIN

1. The growing awareness of the catastrophic consequences which anti-personnel mines continue to cause in numerous countries should encourage all of us to want to move forward with determination to realise the fundamental aim of the Ottawa Anti-Personnel Mine Convention. That aim is nothing less than a complete ban on the production, use, stockpiling and transfer on these weapons which, up to now, have shown themselves to be too easy to produce and to easy to procure. The fundamental aim of the Convention is to remove these inhumane weapons definitively from the lives of entire populations. We need to renew our efforts in a concerted manner.

2. The dangers posed by anti-personnel mines continue long after the period of armed conflict which gave rise to their original use. Too often today, the good news of the end of a conflict is quickly dampened by the realization of the extent of the challenge of eliminating anti-personnel mines. Urgent post conflict reconstruction – the reconstruction not just of physical infrastructures but of human communities and of normal social and economic activity - is put back at times by years, at times by an entire generation.

3. Great progress has been made since the commitments first undertaken in Ottawa. We have heard the statistics of over 20 million mines destroyed and of a drastic reduction in the number of producers. But we have also heard the numbers of deaths (over 20,000) still caused by anti-personnel mines, year after year, the numbers of those maimed, as well as the socio-economic consequences which affect millions of women, men

and children. It is estimated that there are in our world approximately 230 million mines still remain to be eliminated.

4. The Ottawa Convention and the process which it set in motion are unique as regards the level of cooperation fostered among different actors: governments, humanitarian organizations, the military and representatives of civil society. The efforts required to definitively eliminate anti-personnel mines cannot be achieved by any one nation, any one agency any one sector of society. They require the widest cooperation of humanitarian, societal and economic actors.

5. It is the hope of the Holy See that such a spirit of cooperation will further develop also with those nations which find themselves in a position of not yet being able to acceded to the Convention. "Every step counts" is the title that has been given to this Fourth Meeting of the States Parties: every contribution counts! It is to be hoped that, while awaiting the desired rapid universal ratification of the Convention, relationships with non-States Parties will be marked by the most complete understanding and cooperation possible and that those States will do everything in their power to offer full cooperation, wherever possible, to achieve the Conventions aims.

6. The process set in motion in Ottawa was preceded by a vast campaign to generate public awareness of the inhumane nature of anti-personnel mines. That process of the education of consciences and of communities around the world must continue and develop into a consolidated process of solidarity. Our society too often has a short memory and a limited time span for concentration. Public opinion must be continuously alerted to the fact the so much is yet to be achieved. Goodwill must be fostered and be accompanied by effective cooperation and adequate funding.

7. The highest priority must be given to the victims of anti-personnel mines. The rights of those handicapped through land mines must be respected, throughout their life cycles. Their suffering will endure for their entire lives; our duty of solidarity with them must also endure. Our solidarity must ensure in particular their right of access to appropriate health care and to education, including professional training.

8. Any delay or weakening of enthusiasm in the full implementation of the Ottawa Convention will only mean more and more loss of life, more and more victims. In this era of interdependence, it is no longer tolerable to condemn, through inaction, entire populations to live in fear and precariousness. We need to repeat that anti-personnel mines do not offer a future of security and peace. On the contrary, they perpetuate insecurity and delay the search for a just peace among nations and peoples.

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