



REPUBLIQUE DU SENEGAL  
Un Peuple – Un But – Une Foi

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MINISTERE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGERES  
ET DES SENEGALAIS DE L'EXTERIEUR

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CENTRE NATIONAL D'ACTION ANTIMINES

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PROJET D'ASSISTANCE A LA LUTTE ANTIMINES EN CASAMANCE  
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**REPORT OF THE 21<sup>st</sup> CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO  
THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING,  
PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER OF ANTIPERSONNEL MINES AND ON  
THEIR DESTRUCTION**

A Delegation from Senegal led by **Ambassador Papa Maguèye DIOP**, Director of the National Mine Action Centre (CNAMS), took part to the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the State Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of the Antipersonnel Mines and on their Destruction (**Ottawa Convention**), from **20 to 24 November 2023**, in Geneva.

The Delegation also included:

- ✓ **Mr. François Michel Moundor DIENE**, First Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Senegal to the United Nations Office in Geneva ;
- ✓ **Mrs Fatou Bintoul Hadji MALE**, Head of the Division of Administration, Finances and Logistic from CNAMS ; and
- ✓ **Mr. Ibrahima SECK**, Head of Operations and Information Management Division from CNAMS.

The 21<sup>st</sup> MSP was attended by **100** of the **164 Signatory States** of the Convention and **35 observers** including **14 Non Party States**.

## OPENING CEREMONY

The Protocol Ceremony, presided over by **H.E. Thomas GÖBEL, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Conference on Disarmament**, began with a brief presentation of the objectives of the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference, focusing on the review of:

- the status of the implementation of the Convention, related to the clearance of mined areas, the risk reduction and mine risk education;
- the Conclusions and Recommendations arising from the mandates of the Committees on the implementation of article 5 and 7;
- the challenges related to the Universalization of the Convention.

The speeches of the Minister of State at the German Federal Foreign Office, **Mrs. Katja KEUL**; the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and Under Secretary General of the United Nations, **Mrs. Izumi NAKAMITSU**; the Convention's Special Envoy, **HRH Prince Mired Bin Raad Bin Zeid AL HUSSEIN of Jordan**; the Humanity & Inclusion Ambassador, **Ms. Emilie VATH**, on behalf of the mine victims and survivors; the Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (**ICRC**), **Dr. Gilles CARBONNIER**; the mine action fellow from Sri Lanka, **Ms. Nimaya DAHANAYAKE**, on behalf of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (**ICBL**); and the President of the Council of Foundation of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (**GICHD**), **Dr. Barbara HAERING** were then given at the ceremony.

They all welcomed the holding of this important meeting by underlining the hope it leads State Parties to free their countries from explosive devices while encouraging them to take into account Gender and Diversity issues in the implementation of their programmes. While urging the donors to assist affected State parties to put an end to accidents caused by these deadly devices and beyond, restore human dignity, they also welcomed the efforts to universalize the Convention and called non-state parties to join.

Taking back the floor, the President indicated that a large number of challenges await the Convention with the increase in the number of victims. According to him, there are opportunities to make progress for next year, in terms of efforts that would allow the accession of States. Financial and technical assistance must be increased to speed up the implementation of Articles 5 and 7 and hope for a mine free world.

The adoption of the **Agenda** and the statement of the **Programme** of the Conference followed the Protocol Ceremony as well as the election of the **08 Vice-Presidents (France, Iraq, the Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey and Uganda)** and the appointment of **HE Mr. Julien THÖNI**, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Conference on Disarmament and **Mr. Juan Carlos RUAN**, Director of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of the Convention, respectively as **Secretary-General** and **Executive Coordinator of the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference**.

## **THE SESSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE**

During the meeting, States Parties and some Observers made general statements congratulating the President and the ISU on the successful organization of the Conference. They discussed the strengthening of collaboration, the evolution of the Convention with the end of the cycle that is approaching (**2025**) and the political and financial challenges faced by States Parties.

**Ukraine** made a presentation on its request **for an extension of 10 years** to clear its territory from explosive devices. In this regard, **France, Chair of the Committee for the Implementation of Article 5**, reported observations and recommendations on this request. In summary, it noted that the Committee recognizes Ukraine's willingness to strengthen its efforts to implement Article 5 but that it should **update this with clearer data and a much more detailed Work Plan**.

The other States Parties and Observers, for their part, focused their interventions on the 10 years deadline requested by Ukraine and which shall be halved; they insisted on the presentation of a detailed and budgeted work plan. Ukraine has been accused of possessing and using explosive devices despite its status as a signatory of the Convention. This charge was rejected by the representative of Kiev who strongly protested that the explosive devices were not laid by them.

It was then **Eritrea's** turn to make a statement on its request for an extension focusing on achievements and remaining challenges. The Committee informed the Assembly that the request is not yet examined by the members but that initial comments have been communicated to Eritrea, which took note and intends to work with the ISU to make the necessary corrections. The other speakers encouraged Eritrea and urged it to provide the necessary details to enable it to comply with the Convention.

A reception hosted by the ICRC at its headquarters closed the First Day of the Conference.

The Second Day focused on the Assembly's review of the activities of the **Committee on Victim Assistance**. Thus, **Uganda, in its capacity as Chair of the Committee**, followed by **Slovenia, Focal Point for Gender Equality**, reported on activities during 2023. States Parties reported on progress in this area but addressed remaining challenges in the implementation of the **Oslo Action Plan**, especially the lack of financial means and insufficient integration of victim assistance into policies, national plans and legal frameworks. In this regard, Slovenia, the newly elected Chair of the Committee, stressed the importance of continued support for victim assistance and outlined priorities for 2024.

The review of the activities of the Committee for the implementation of Article 5 resumed on the Third Day.

On this subject, the Chairman of the Committee (**France**), followed by the **Focal Point for Gender Equality (Colombia)**, made a Report on the current situation and the implementation prospects covering the period 2023-2024. Some States Parties provided updates. **Senegal** presented the significant results it has achieved since the extension of its 2020 deadline to 2026, thanks to the improvement of security conditions (security operations carried out by the Army, new peace agreements, laying down of arms by the faction «**DIAKAYE**» of the MFDC in the Department of Bignona and the reconstruction and reintegration actions undertaken in the Region).

For example, Non-Technical Surveys (**NTS**) were conducted in **15 localities** to clean up **11 areas** in **07 localities** for a total area of **105,688 sqm** and **32 mines** were removed and destroyed. The Ambassador, Director of the CNAMS, warmly thanked all the friendly countries that have financed these activities, in particular the European Union and the United States of America. As for the remaining challenges in his country, the delegate of Senegal drew the attention of the partners to the fact that a better control of the National Authority on the execution of funding with transparent visibility of the allocation of resources, would help speed up mine clearance. Finally, he invited donors to make additional efforts for Senegal which can, with a little more support, be declared free of mines by 2026.

Mine Action Review (**MAR**) asked Senegal, after welcoming its progress, **“to definitively indicate whether mines remain around Djirack or other military bases and provide detailed plans for the clearance of all remaining mined areas around military bases.”** MAR added that

Senegal should accelerate its evidence-based NTS to establish an accurate baseline estimate of the extent and location of landmine contamination.

In addition, the State of Senegal was asked to show to the Mine action international community, apart from its grant to run the CNAMS, that demining is one of its priorities by investing in field operations and better encouraging donors to strengthen their support.

Different countries, some international organizations, many observers and civil society representations commented on the implementation of Article 5 by States Parties.

**Switzerland** which provides political and financial support to mine action for more than two decades expressed over its concern on the delay noted in the global demining planning which is not encouraging and urged State parties to respect deadlines while complying with procedures.

Recalling the importance of supporting an inclusive Assembly that promotes gender, **Canada** advocated a collective approach that links security, development and humanitarian impacts of mines to consider livelihood preservation, poverty reduction, food security and protection of civilians, in the great spirit of Oslo (4<sup>th</sup> Review Conference). He also called on Ukraine to respond transparently to suspicions of violations of the Convention, even though it admitted that it was Russia that created the problem by illegally invading that country and massively using antipersonnel mines.

**Japan** is committed to promoting the universalization of the Convention especially in the Asia Pacific region where **14** of the **33** countries that are not States Parties belong. At the same time it will continue to provide financial support for mine clearance, regional cooperation and assistance to victims through experience sharing.

The European Union (**EU**), as the second largest donor of mine action, has indicated that it will continue to support States Parties and hopes that universalization will reach other non-Parties states to the Convention. Regarding the increase in requests for extension, it invited States Parties to submit detailed and budgeted Plans asking them to make efforts to meet their obligations. Finally, the EU strongly condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Mine Advisory Group (**MAG**) stressed the need to help countries like Guinea Bissau build new capacity. MAR also encouraged States to redouble

their efforts to make a good news announcement at the 5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference.

Finally, Colombia, as the next Chair of the Article 5 Implementation Committee, affirmed its willingness to monitor and collaborate with all States Parties. He stressed that new challenges have arisen and that a spirit of cooperation and dialogue involving all stakeholders is needed to prepare for the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference.

The sessions continued with consideration of the activities of the **Committee on Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance** on the Fourth Day. **Thailand, Chair**, and **the Netherlands, Focal Point for Gender Equality**, made update of the situation. The Report encourages the Individualized Approach as a relevant tool to assist States Parties to benefit from donor support. Thus, individualized approaches were organized for Senegal, Tajikistan and Somalia.

The importance of enhancing cooperation and assistance and the usefulness of creating national mine action platforms to foster such cooperation and support the effective and efficient implementation of the Convention, in accordance with the Oslo Action Plan, were also highlighted.

**Algeria**, as the **newly elected Chair**, presented the Committee's priorities for 2024. On this subject, France asked donors not to forget to support, while they are concentrating their aid on Ukraine, States Parties that are in the process of completing the work like Senegal.

With the **Committee on Cooperative Compliance**, the destruction of stocks was discussed, the progress made mentioned and the remaining challenges addressed. **Greece** and **Ukraine** provided updates. It was recalled that it is the responsibility of all States Parties to make concerted efforts to ensure the universalization of the Convention and the increase in the number of States Parties (**164** to date), in the run-up to the 5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference.

Finally, as part of his mandate, **the President made the Report on the deficit budgetary situation** regarding the financing of meetings of the Convention. According to the Report, States Parties, including Senegal, have not honored their contributions. He has invited them to fulfil their obligations.

**The ISU Director presented his 2023 Activity Report as well as his Work plan for 2024.** The States Parties highly commended him for his continued support to the Convention.

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**Australia, Coordinator of the Sponsorship Programme**, made an update and called on all States to strengthen their support for the Programme to ensure wider participation in Convention meetings.

## **DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

At the end of the sessions, the Conference made Conclusions and Recommendations on:

- 1) reaffirming the determination of States Parties to put an end to the suffering caused by antipersonnel mines;
- 2) request to States Parties to intensify their efforts to implement Article 5 in order to update the indicators of the Oslo Action Plan;
- 3) strengthening coordination and continuity of universalization activities before the 5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference;
- 4) the launch of an appeal to encourage Non-Parties States to accede to the Convention;
- 5) exploring all ways and means to ensure that environmental and climate change considerations are taken into account in the implementation of the Convention.

This was followed by Decisions on Eritrea and Ukraine extension requests.

- ✓ **In the case of Eritrea**, which had not provided any information on the implementation of its Article 5 obligations, given the circumstances, the Conference:
  - set the deadline for submitting the application by 31 March 2024 with the requested information;
  - urged Eritrea to seek ISU's support to prepare the application with a detailed and budgeted Action Plan;
  - requested Eritrea to provide updates at the statutory meetings of the Convention.
- ✓ **For Ukraine:**

The Conference, after having unanimously agreed to give it 10 years until 1 December 2033, asked Ukraine to:

- commit to presenting to the 25<sup>th</sup> Conference of States Parties, in 2028, the status of the demining of its territory;

- ensure that standards, policies and methodologies are applied;
- develop a resource mobilization strategy to ensure timely implementation;
- submit annually a detailed and updated Work Plan, in addition to its Transparency Report, in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention;
- keep States Parties regularly informed of relevant developments concerning the implementation of Article 5.

On the other hand, the Conference decided to extend the mandate of the current ISU Director so as not to disrupt preparations for the **5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference of the Convention, scheduled for December 2024, in the city of Siem Reap, in Cambodia.**

The Conference also requested States participating in Convention meetings to pay off the remaining of their contribution.

New members have joined the various Committees of the Convention:

- ✓ **Committee on Article 5 Implementation: Colombia and Sweden** (until the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference), **Thailand and the United Kingdom** (until the end of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Conference of States Parties);
- ✓ **Committee on Victim Assistance: Slovenia and Zambia** (until the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference), **Burkina Faso and the Netherlands** (until the end of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of States Parties);
- ✓ **Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance: Algeria and Japan** (until the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference), **Turkey and Denmark** (until the end of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Assembly of States Parties);
- ✓ **Committee on Cooperative Compliance: Norway and South Africa** (until the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference), **Germany and Peru** (until the end of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the States Parties).

To close the 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, the Conference set the dates of the **Intersessional Meetings from 18 to 20 June 2024** and elected:



- **Dr LY THUCH**, Senior Minister and First Vice-President of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (**CMAA**), as President of the 5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference of the Convention;
- **H.E Mrs Tomiko ICHIKAWA**, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament, as President of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Conference of States Parties.
- **H.E. Mrs. Eunice Tembo LUAMBIA**, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Zambia to the United Nations, as President of the Twenty-Third (23<sup>rd</sup>) Conference of States Parties.

In the margins of the sessions of the Convention, the Senegalese Delegation participated in various «Side Events» meetings.

Therefore, on Monday, November 20 at 1pm, it attended the «Side event» organized by MAG on the theme «**Remobilizing resources to fight against contamination by antipersonnel mines in West Africa**». H.E.Mr. Yves MAREK, Ambassador, Secretary General of the National Commission for the Elimination of Antipersonnel Mines of France, Colonel Baham NAGDAF, Director of the Demining Centre of Mauritania, Ambassador Papa Maguèye DIOP, Director of the National Mine Action Centre of Senegal and Mr. Seydou Nourou GAYE of Humanity and Inclusion each spoke at this session.

Ambassador MAREK, Moderator, recalled that the objective of the Convention to free the world from mines in 2025 could not be achieved because these explosive devices are still present and continue to cause significant damage in the affected countries. He raised the challenges of financing mine action in West African countries. According to him, countries like Senegal and Mauritania can completely clean up their territories if they are supported. It would be possible to bring the good news to the 5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference.

Following him, Colonel Baham made an update of the situation in his country. With funding from France for its Humanitarian Development Demining Programme (**PNDHD**), Mauritania was able to clear **575,000 sqm** of land, raise awareness among more than **260,000** people about the risk of mines, without forgetting to take into account the gender dimension and victim assistance. He concluded by thanking MAG for the initiative and calls on donors to further support these countries so that they can be declared free of mines.

The Director of the CNAMS focused his intervention on the reappropriation of mine action by the State of Senegal which resulted in the

efforts to secure the global context (signing peace agreements followed by the laying down of arms by MFDC combatants). He mentioned the renewed interest of donors for Senegal, with the return of the EU and the United States, as well as the new commitment of the Netherlands and the promises of Algeria and Japan.

The Senegalese Delegation then went the same day at 4 pm at the headquarters of the GICHD to meet Mr. Stanislav **DAMJANOVIC**, Adviser in charge of Operational Efficiency and Mrs Noor **ZANGANA**, Adviser in charge of Capacity Building in Information Management.

The Director of the CNAMS requested the support of the GICHD to update and modernize its Information System. In particular, he expressed the wish to migrate to IMSMA core which ensures more efficient management. In response, the GICHD has shown its willingness to strengthen the capacities of the CNAMS and all other structures in African countries by making available new information management software.

On the other hand, CNAMS and the GICHD discussed the organization of an ECOWAS Seminar in Senegal with a view to creating a Regional Exchange Framework on cross-border security issues related to improvised explosive devices, among others.

On Tuesday 21 November 2023, the Delegation also took part in the European Union “side event” on various themes: **“Launch of the Global VA Conference Report, Universalization Update, Dialogues on VA in Iraq and Sudan and Article 5 in Colombia and Zimbabwe”**. This was for representatives of States Parties that have held national dialogues or are considering to do so, to present an update on their activities. The states concerned were Colombia, Ghana, Sudan, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

Then, the intervention of the Special Envoy for Universalization noted the efforts made in collaboration with the President regarding the project. The Co-Chairs (Germany and Cambodia) of the Third Global Conference on Victim Assistance, held in October, in Phnom Penh, presented the final report before allowing Iraq and Sudan to take stock of the challenges and successes of their dialogues on victim assistance.

At another “side event” hosted by Mine Action Review on Wednesday, 22 November, on the theme **“Implementation of Article 5: Towards the Fifth Review Conference: Learning and Identifying Challenges to Strengthen Future Implementation”**, the Delegation of Senegal attended the discussions on the challenges and lessons learned from the

implementation of Article 5 since the Oslo Review Conference. Speakers said implementation must be not only timely but also inclusive and financially sustainable; they discussed the pros and cons of ambitious targets.

The Delegation also held three meetings with:

- ✓ the Delegation of the European Union in Geneva to discuss the implementation of the granted funds to Senegal through operators. This was an opportunity for Ambassador DIOP to talk about the funding process adopted by the EU which does not allow the National Authority to have a transparent visibility of the allocation of resources granted on behalf of the State of Senegal in the context of the implementation of the Convention;
- ✓ the Chair of the Committee on Article 5 (Colombia as the new Chair) in a direct dialogue with the Committee that wished to gather the specific needs of Senegal;
- ✓ the Director of the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (**CCM**) who indicated that Senegal has not submitted a transparency report since 2018. Ambassador DIOP has promised to remedy this.

Finally, a working breakfast brought together the delegations of Algeria and Senegal at the Residence of the Ambassador of Algeria; it was an opportunity for Algeria to offer Senegal its support for demining. The two Parties agreed to a visit of the Algerian delegation in Dakar to study the modalities of this support.