About 50 percent of the landmass of the country is believed to be under the threat of landmines, it was stated on Tuesday.

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At the celebration of Landmine Day held at the World Bank premises, Lulit Zewde representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) said that Ethiopia is believed to be under threat from landmines.

During her presentation of the post Ratification of Mine Ban Treaty opportunities, challenges and prospects said that as Africa has been a region of inter and intrastate conflicts, landmines have been used widely and many parts of the continent are still covered by landmines. "Ethiopia is no exception from this," she added.

She also stated that the ratification posed some challenges. "The ratification of the convention creates a legally binding situation where there are deadlines for making, clearance and destruction of stockpiles of mined areas. These obligations are daunting unless there is adequate financial and technical support," she stated.

In 1997 representatives of states and governments of many countries signed the landmine Ban Treaty in Ottawa, Canada, on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, transfer and production of anti personnel mines worldwide. In the same event it was decided that March 1st be remembered as an International Landmine Ban Treaty Day.

"As one of the first signatories of this treaty in the world, the event has been colourfully marked in Ethiopia over the past four years," said Bekele Gonta, Director of Landmine survivors Network Ethiopia.

He stated that this year's celebration is very special as Ethiopia ratified the mine ban treaty in November 2004 which created great appreciation and applaud among many countries in the world.

Land Mine Survivors Network (LSN) - Ethiopia, an international non-governmental organization works with people with disabilities mostly with mine victims.

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