

## Annan urges governments to ratify instrument against landmines, other explosive devices (UN)

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**Despite the efforts of the international community, landmines, booby-traps and other explosive devices are victimizing civilians, causing excessive suffering to combatants and hindering the socio-economic reconstruction of societies struggling to emerge from the ravages of war, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said today.**

(25.11.2005)

In a message delivered by Enrique Roman-Morey of the UN Department of Disarmament Affairs to the Seventh Annual Conference on the Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which prohibits or restricts the use of these devices, Mr. Annan said they aggravated and prolonged the horrendous consequences of armed conflict, threatening not only present societies but also future generations.

"Amended Protocol II is a legally binding international instrument which covers the use of all mines. As an important tool for minimizing the humanitarian hazard posed by these weapons, it is also an essential complement to other multilateral efforts in this field. The full and effective application of its provisions will significantly improve the protection of civilian populations," he said.

"I echo the appeal made by the Heads of State and Government during the 2005 World Summit, urging all States Parties to the Amended Protocol II to fully implement their respective obligations and calling on States in a position to do so to provide greater technical assistance to mine-affected States. This will require consultation and even closer cooperation among the States Parties," he added.

Mr. Annan noted that since its adoption in 1996, 85 States have consented to be bound by the Protocol. "I welcome this progress, and appeal once more to those countries that have not yet ratified this instrument to do so as soon as possible," he said.

Meanwhile, the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) released "A Portfolio of Mine Action Projects 2006" and said that with \$51 million in hand, UN agencies, national authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) needed another \$391 million next year to remove and destroy landmines, help their victims, teach people how to avoid such explosives in 30 countries and three territories.

Despite the progress being made to adhere to the 1999 anti-personnel mine-ban treaty, the "Ottawa Convention," between 15,000 and 20,000 persons were being killed or injured each year by landmines and other explosive remnants of war, it said, 1,200 of them in Afghanistan alone.

Von: 23 November 2005, <http://www.un.org>

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