



For immediate release

New Zealand urged to promote Mine Ban Treaty

13 years since the landmine ban became law

(Wellington: 1 March 2012) The New Zealand Campaign Against Landmines (CALM) is calling on the Minister of Foreign Affairs to continue New Zealand's strong support for the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty. March 1, 2012, marks 13 years since the treaty banning antipersonnel landmines became binding international law.

“New Zealand should be more active in talking to countries about joining the Mine Ban Treaty and implementing the treaty's provisions on mine clearance and victim assistance,” said Mary Wareham, CALM Coordinator. “As the Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control no longer exists, we are urging the Minister of Foreign Affairs to take action on landmines, which remain an important humanitarian disarmament concern.”

In a letter to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Murray McCully, CALM outlines four measures that New Zealand could take in support of the Mine Ban Treaty in 2012, namely:

- Urge the United States to conclude its policy review on banning antipersonnel landmines with a decision to join the Mine Ban Treaty without delay.
- Encourage the last remaining Pacific states outside the Mine Ban Treaty of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Tonga to join the Treaty as soon as possible.
- Dedicate diplomatic resources to the Mine Ban Treaty's leadership.
- Continue to provide assistance to ensure that states parties to the Mine Ban Treaty can meet their obligations and to ensure that Pacific Islands Forum members can tackle the long-standing threat posed by World War Two-era unexploded ordnance.

A total of 159 countries have joined the Treaty, most recently Finland in January 2012. The Mine Ban Treaty comprehensively prohibits antipersonnel mines and requires their clearance and assistance to victims. Every NATO member except the US has foresworn the use of antipersonnel mines, as have other US allies, including Afghanistan and Iraq. The US and nearly all of the 35 states that have not yet joined the Mine Ban Treaty are in de facto compliance with most of the treaty's provisions.

In December 2011, the government unexpectedly scrapped the dedicated position of Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control, a position last held by Hon. Georgina te Heuheu who retired at the last election. The Cabinet list of ministerial portfolios issued on 12 December 2011 stated that New Zealand's Minister of Foreign Affairs

now “incorporates the responsibilities formerly included in the Disarmament and Arms Control portfolio.”

CALM was established by New Zealand NGOs in September 1993. It is a member of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), 1997 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, and sister campaign to the Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition (ANZCMC). Both CALM and the ANZCMC are governed jointly by a working group comprised of the following groups: Amnesty International Aotearoa NZ, Caritas Aotearoa NZ, Christian World Service, Disarmament and Security Center, Engineers for Social Responsibility NZ, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War NZ, National Council of Women NZ, National Consultative Committee on Disarmament, Oxfam NZ, Pax Christi Aotearoa NZ, Peace Movement Aotearoa, Soroptimist International NZ, United Nations Association NZ, United Nations Youth Association NZ, UNICEF NZ, and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Aotearoa.

The Mine Ban Treaty entered into force on March 1, 1999, just 15 months after it was negotiated - the shortest time ever for a multilateral treaty. On March 1, 2012, the ICBL is launching an action to “Lend Your Leg for a mine-free world.” The action seeks to build awareness ahead of the UN Day for Mine Action and Mine Awareness on April 4, 2012, when people all over the world will be asked to roll up their trouser legs or push down their socks in solidarity with survivors of landmines and other explosive remnants of war and in support the Mine Ban Treaty.

For more information, contact Mary Wareham, CALM coordinator. Tel. (021) 996-905

For more information, see:

- CALM website – www.calm.org.nz
- CALM Letter to Minister of Foreign Affairs - <http://bit.ly/xjmfbl>
- Statement on loss of Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control - <http://bit.ly/sS5aPe>
- Lend Your Leg action: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6U3AEMtkZU>