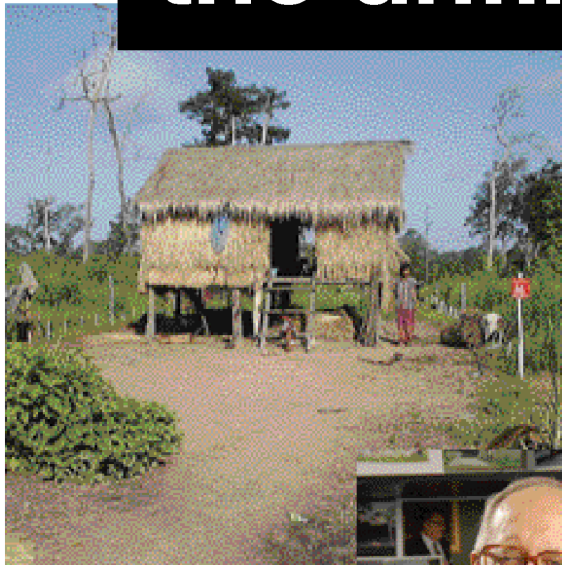


# the ban of anti-personnel landmines:

## the unfinished success story

Interview with Dr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), former President of the ICRC, instrumental for achieving a total ban of landmines.



### President Sommaruga, why are you travelling to Nairobi in November 2004 ?

The Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World, the most important event regarding landmines since 1999, will assemble Heads of State, representatives of international organizations, as well as of civil society, to review the progress of the Convention banning anti-personnel landmines and to agree on an Action Plan for the future. For somebody, like me, who has been fostering the total ban of landmines from the beginning, this high level meeting is of paramount importance in order to keep momentum in the fight to alleviate suffering of victims.

### What is this Convention all about ?

The Convention, negotiated in 1997 and which entered into force in March 1999, prohibits the use, stockpile, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. At present, 143 States have ratified the Convention, although some key countries still keep and a few actually use landmines.

### What are the challenges ahead ?

Over the last decade important steps have been achieved : destruction of more than 37 million stockpiled mines; thousands of landmine survivors assisted; mined areas cleared and funds made available. But much more needs to be done in the coming years, particularly with regard to the overall financing of projects, assistance to victims and the clearance of mined areas and unexploded ordnance, which have an impact on the daily life of people struggling to rebuild their lives after conflict.

### What is the role of the Centre in this endeavour ?

The Centre contributes to the international effort against landmines by providing operational support, such as helping to improve the planning, management, safety and cost-effectiveness of demining programs. In addition, the Centre undertakes practical research work, which looks into issues like the use of mine detecting dogs, mechanical equipments and the best methods for mine risk education. Last but not least, since September 2001 the GICHD hosts the de facto Secretariat of the Convention providing support and advice to the annual President of the Convention and the States Parties.

### For further info :

2004 Nairobi Summit  
on a Mine-Free World  
[www.reviewconference.org](http://www.reviewconference.org)

Geneva International Centre  
for Humanitarian Demining  
[www.gichd.ch](http://www.gichd.ch)