



## Press Release

### **African States commend the work of Geneva Call and acknowledge the importance of engaging armed Non-State Actors in a landmine ban**

On 26 April 2005, Geneva Call had the honour of presenting its mission and activities to the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) to which all Member States of the AU Commission, as well as stakeholders, were convened. It was the first time since the creation of the Council that a non-governmental organisation was invited to address the Council and exchange expertise and views in an open meeting.

During the hearing, participants were briefed on the involvement of Non-State Actors (NSAs) in the landmine equation, on strategies and progress in engaging them and on the challenges that lie ahead. Among the facts and figures presented to illustrate the magnitude of the problem was the statistic that some 60 armed groups were found to be using landmines in 21 countries in 2003-2004. Moreover, participants heard concrete examples of Geneva Call's work in Africa, particularly in Burundi, Somalia and Sudan. Most of the Ambassadors were very interested in the inclusive approach adopted by Geneva Call in engaging NSAs to ban landmines and in its positive humanitarian impact on the local population.



[Photo: Geneva Call 2005]

Geneva Call welcomed the intention stated by the AU to urge all its Member States to adopt a united and strong stand in favour of a total ban on the use of antipersonnel mines and to engage NSAs to strive toward a mine free-world as embodied by the Nairobi Summit and mentioned in the Common African Position on Antipersonnel Landmines.

Geneva Call is pleased to have opened the door to direct dialogue between the AU Peace and Security Council and civil society and to have shared know-how on antipersonnel mines and NSAs with a policy-making body such as the AU. Geneva Call also looks forward to a successful collaboration and expresses its deep appreciation to the Commission for this initiative. It especially thanks the Embassy of the Kingdom of Lesotho for its facilitation as Chair of the PSC.

Geneva, 3 May 2005

For more information on Geneva Call, please consult [www.genevacall.org](http://www.genevacall.org)