



## Communication

### **Somaliland on the way to adopt a legislation banning anti-personnel mines**

Hargeisa/Geneva, 27 November 2007 – In collaboration with the Institute for Practical Research and Training (IPRT), Geneva Call and the Somaliland Mine Action Center (SMAC) held a workshop for members of the Somaliland Parliament to prepare the adoption of mine ban legislation. The workshop, which took place from 27 to 29 October in Hargeisa, brought together approximately 50 people from the House of Representatives, the House of Elders, the Government and mine action stakeholders (United Nations Development Programme, Danish Demining Group, Halo Trust, Handicap International, Disability Action Network and Police Explosive Ordnance teams).

The Vice-President of Somaliland, Ahmed Yusuf Yasin, who is also the head of the mine action authority, opened the event. He reminded the participants of the significant efforts made by Somaliland to address the landmine scourge and called upon the international community to continue to support these efforts, particularly mine clearance. The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi, echoed the words of the Vice-President, and stressed the importance of enacting a law banning anti-personnel mines in Somaliland. The Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Interior and Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Resettlement attended the workshop as well.

Somaliland authorities have on many occasions expressed interest in joining the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty but cannot do so as long as Somaliland is not recognized by the international community as an independent State. In 1999, the House of Representatives of Somaliland passed a non-binding resolution calling for the elimination of anti-personnel mines. However, no formal measures have been taken yet to prohibit use, possession and transfer of these weapons.

The workshop provided an opportunity to discuss in detail the content of the draft legislation prepared by Geneva Call, SMAC and IPRT, in consultation with expert organizations. The draft bill is now being finalized by the House of Representatives Sub-Committee for Internal Affairs and Security before consideration by the full House. The President of Geneva Call, Elisabeth Decrey Warner, said that Somaliland has to be commended for demonstrating such a firm commitment against landmines despite having an insecure and instable environment.

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