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Princess of Wales Memorial Fund
THE WORK CONTINUES

DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES MEMORIAL FUND ANNOUNCES GRANTS TO HELP GET CLUSTER BOMBS BANNED

‘Local Voices, Global Ban’ funding set to help campaigners continue the fight for a total ban

Following the success of last week’s conference in Vienna, where 138 states pledged their support for a banning treaty on cluster munitions, The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund is announcing details of 10 grants which will help campaigners keep up the pressure for a comprehensive ban. The grants will enable campaigners to continue the work begun by Diana, Princess of Wales with landmines, helping to ensure that thousands of innocent civilians are spared the indiscriminate injury and loss of life brought by cluster bombs.

Since February 2007, governments from around the world have been working on the ‘Oslo Process’, towards an international treaty banning cluster munitions to be signed next year. But while the process continues to gather momentum, there is still work to be done in ensuring the strongest possible treaty. The Vienna conference saw a number of countries – including the UK – push for technical exceptions that would weaken any treaty.

Samantha Rennie, of the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund said:

“Through her pioneering landmine work, Diana, Princess of Wales touched the heart of the world in showing the pain weapons of war can cause for civilians. Her courage was instrumental on the road to a treaty banning landmines, and it’s now time for people around the world to make their voices heard on cluster bombs. These grants will help people, especially those in affected countries, put pressure on governments to sign up in full to a banning treaty, with no hiding place for governments seeking to derail the process by weakening the treaty.”

Grants being awarded include support for:

- A former Serbian mine clearance officer, who lost both arms and legs through a cluster bomb incident, now a leading spokesperson on the damage they cause. The award will help carry his voice further.
- Developing a national coalition of NGOs to campaign against cluster munitions with media and politicians in Brazil.
- Activities to engage young people in raising awareness about cluster munitions in Belarus

Samantha Rennie concluded:

“The proposed Oslo treaty is a step in the right direction, but there’s still a long way to go in stamping out the harm caused by these terrible weapons. We applaud the great work being done by the campaigners receiving grants today, and look forward to supporting more work in the months to come.”

ENDS

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Notes to editors:

The full list of organisations and activities being awarded 'Local Voices, Global Ban' grants are:

Association of Public Policies (Argentina):

- To increase public awareness of cluster bombs in Argentina and Uruguay
- To increase civil society participation in campaigning activities on cluster bombs
- To promote and facilitate Government Policy in both these countries to support a legally binding treaty to ban cluster bombs

Azerbaijan Campaign to Ban Landmines (Azerbaijan):

- To increase public support for the Oslo Process
- To conduct lobbying work to attain support from ministers and parliamentarians for the Oslo Process
- To maintain the participation of the government in the Oslo Process

Action Group Landmine.de (Germany):

The production of a brochure on cluster munitions.

Support Centre for Association and Foundations (Belarus):

- To engage civil society, with a particular focus on youth in the campaign to ban cluster bombs
- To increase public awareness on the Oslo Process and the effects of cluster bombs
- To engage the government in the Oslo Process

Norwegian People's Aid, to support a Serbian cluster munitions survivor spokesperson (Serbia):

- To undertake English lessons to improve survivor's understanding and speaking capabilities in English
- To purchase computer equipment to aid survivor with the work that undertaken as spokesperson for the CMC

Brazilian Campaign to Ban Landmines (Brazil):

- To develop a national coalition against cluster bombs
- To increase parliamentary support for the Oslo Process
- To change the national policy on cluster bombs by May 2008

Arab Network for Research on Landmines & ERW (Syria): The planning and implementation of a workshop to raise national awareness of the Oslo Process

Vision Association for Development, Rehabilitation and Care (Lebanon): The design and distribution of a poster conveying information on the Oslo Process

Polish Red Cross (Poland):

- To increase awareness of the Oslo Process amongst NGOs, the public and parliamentarians
- To create a group of parliamentarians to lobby on the issue
- To advocate for Poland to fully support the Oslo Process.

Sustainable Peace and Development Organisation (Pakistan):

- To increase civil society and parliamentary support for the Oslo Process
- To encourage the government to participate in the Oslo Process

Cluster bombs have consistently killed and injured large numbers of civilians over 40 years of their use. They are fired from the ground or dropped from the air, dispersing hundreds of bomblets or submunitions over wide areas and littering the ground with explosives and shrapnel. Unexploded submunitions can explode when people hit them with a tool while farming, or by inquisitive children attracted by their bright colours, or simply from someone stepping on them. The presence of such unexploded submunitions threatens life and limb, hampers provision of relief and impedes development for years after a conflict. Unlike landmine and other indiscriminate weapons, there is currently no provision in international law that specifically addresses the problems of cluster munitions and their devastating effects on civilian populations.

'Local Voices, Global Ban' is an initiative aimed at helping local groups educate people about cluster bombs and encourage their governments to support a ban, with small grants funded by the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund and administered by Landmine Action. Full details can be found at www.localvoicesglobalban.org

The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund continues the princess's humanitarian work in the UK and overseas. By giving grants to organisations, championing charitable causes, advocacy, campaigning and awareness raising, the Fund works to secure sustainable improvements in the lives of the most vulnerable people in the UK and around the world.