

Statement on Universalization
16th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
20 December 2017



Thank you, Mr. President.

What a long way we have come since the adoption of the Mine Ban Treaty, twenty years ago!

We are delighted to welcome Sri Lanka as the newest State Party.

One hundred and sixty-three states from all regions of the world have joined the life-saving treaty and are implementing its provisions, making it one of the world's most widely accepted treaties. The treaty is bearing fruit, and changing the lives of those living in minefields, which is at the core of our common efforts.

But the job is not done yet, and it won't be until all states are on board.

Mr. President, there are still 34 countries remaining outside of the treaty. We note that most of them are complying with its key provisions. Earlier this month at the UN General Assembly, 15 states not yet party voted in favor of the annual resolution on the implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty. While this is a clear demonstration of their support to the vision of a mine-free world and the purposes of the treaty, it is not enough. We urge all states to accede to the treaty without further delay.

We express our appreciation for your efforts Mr President, in reviving the work of the informal universalization contact group and in conducting meaningful bilateral meetings with a large number of states not party. Such a dialogue is absolutely crucial.

In the past year, the ICBL and its members continued their efforts to promote universalization in eight countries. I will speak in particular about two of them.

In Sri Lanka, our local campaign member carried out bilateral meetings at the highest level and facilitated the exchange of information between stakeholders.

In Myanmar, the ongoing use of antipersonnel mines will put civilians at risks for years to come. Through our work, we are in regular communication with the authorities and we have disseminated our research data to shed light on the recent crisis related to the Rohingya people. The ICBL condemns any use of antipersonnel mines by any actor and encourages Myanmar to take the necessary measures to investigate recent use and to participate in the work of the treaty.

Among the remaining challenges is also the use of antipersonnel mines by some armed non-state actors which has resulted in a significant increase in casualties and threatens to undermine the progress toward our goal of a mine-free world. This year, three brigades of the non-state armed group Free Syrian Army signed the Geneva Call deed of commitment. It

is crucial that specialized agencies have access to areas under the control of armed groups to engage them on the ban of antipersonnel mines and to support their mine action efforts. We also call on parties to armed conflicts or former armed conflicts to conclude humanitarian mine action agreements, like the Colombian Government and the FARC did.

As we celebrate 20 years of tremendous success, let's step up our effort to promote universal adherence to the global norm against landmines. We call upon all states not party and signatories to take the necessary steps to come on board. And we encourage all States Parties to spare no efforts in actively working to further universalize the treaty.

Thank you.