

Statement on Universalization

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10th Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
2 December 2010

Thank you Mr. President.

On behalf of the ICBL, I would like to start by thanking **Canada** and John MacBride in particular, for the exceptional commitment and tireless efforts over the past decade in leading the work of the Universalization Contact Group. We also thank other States Parties that have been active on universalization. The ICBL would also like to commend His Royal Highness Prince Mired on his efforts to further universalize the Treaty. We are very lucky to enjoy His Highness' continued commitment to a mine-free world and wish you success for your future undertakings. At the same time we want to encourage all States Parties to follow your example and engage on universalization at the highest level possible.

We are very concerned that for the past three years no new state has come on board the Mine Ban Treaty. The ICBL still believes that universal adherence to the Treaty and its norm is indispensable to achieve a world free of mines. Today we are encouraged to have heard from a number of states not party, including some that do not that often participate in, and speak at, Mine Ban Treaty meetings.

Over the past year, the ICBL and its members continued to actively encourage States not party to join the treaty and States Parties to continue promoting the treaty by seizing every opportunity.

In the past several months, much of our focus has been on the US landmine policy review, which was launched a year ago and we expect to be concluded soon. Today we are very pleased to see the US delegation participating in this meeting. Throughout the year, we have undertaken a number of actions to ensure that the review process is inclusive, thorough, and aimed at ultimate accession to the Mine Ban Treaty. Just two days ago 15 Nobel Peace Prize Laureates sent a letter to President Obama urging him to ban landmines and join the Treaty. Earlier this year, the ICBL held a global action, where campaigners in 60 countries around the world contacted US embassies to discuss the policy review, which generated multiple reports by US embassies back to the Department of State. In May, the State Department initiated formal consultations with NGOs, which included many ICBL members, including a group of survivors. Parallel, the US campaign has continued its national efforts, such as extensive direct engagement with officials, ongoing online petitions addressed to the President and Secretary of State, and a letter delivered in March to President Obama signed by 65 prominent U.S.-based NGOs, urging submission of the treaty to the Senate for its consent before the end of 2010. The USCBL also contributed to the success of Senator Leahy's remarkable initiative - a letter to President Obama signed in May by 68 US senators, asking the administration to join the treaty.

Once again we would like to call on all States Parties to communicate with the US at the highest possible level about the importance, desirability, and feasibility of the US joining the Treaty. From our discussions with numerous US officials, we firmly believe that such engagement by a significant number of States Parties would make a huge difference. Given the timing of the US policy review, States Parties should do so now.

Other ICBL members in States not party have continued to promote the Treaty and accession by their governments. These include ongoing engagement of ICBL campaigners in **Nepal, Poland, Georgia, Mongolia,** and **Sri Lanka**, to name just a few.

Several ICBL members continued to engage with non-state armed groups, working towards a mine ban and support for humanitarian mine action in NSAG controlled or influenced areas (in line with action 43 of Cartagena Action Plan), which can increase the protection of civilians during armed conflict. In 2010 two Iranian Kurdish groups signed Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Philippines decided to remove its minefields as a result of engagement of the Philippine Campaign to Ban Landmines.

The ICBL also promoted the Treaty at regional and global fora. In October we carried out extensive outreach on the margins of the UNGA First Committee, engaging States not party to support the annual UNGA resolution

and to join as soon as possible. At the regional level, the ICBL promoted the Treaty at the League of Arab States at a regional conference held in Cairo earlier this year. On the European front, we engaged with the President of the European Parliament, who has urged **Finland** and **Poland** to fulfill their pledge to join the treaty by 2012 in order to strengthen "Europe's credibility in the fight against antipersonnel mines." We look forward to seeing Poland completing its ratification in the second half of next year, during its Presidency of the European Union.

Next year, we also expect **Mongolia** to fulfill its earlier announced commitment and finally accede to the Treaty. Last but certainly not least, we will keep special focus on the **Lao PDR** and **Lebanon**. While applauding Laos for hosting last month the excellent 1st Meeting of States Parties of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and Lebanon for hosting the 2nd Meeting of States Parties next year, we strongly believe that there are no compelling reasons for them not to join the Mine Ban Treaty and we call on both states to take now steps to become a party to the Mine Ban Treaty, which is guided by the same humanitarian principles as the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

At the same time, we continue to call on all other states remaining outside of the Treaty, and especially those that have already taken steps towards accession, to join without further delay. Half measures are simply not enough to ensure antipersonnel landmines won't kill and maim again. It is high time to put an end to the landmine era. It is high time for all states to come fully on board the Mine Ban Treaty.

We also urge all States Parties to keep up their energy to fulfill their commitment made under the Cartagena Action Plan to "seize every opportunity to promote" the Treaty and its norm. Without your energy we cannot go much further.

Lastly, we would also like to take this opportunity to call on all States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions that has been signed by 108 states and so far ratified by 47.

Thank you.

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