



ICRC

ICRC Statement on Universalization Third Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, Maputo, 23-27 June 2014

Since the Second Review Conference, five States have ratified or acceded to the Convention -- Finland, Poland, Somalia, South Sudan and Tuvalu – and we wish to warmly welcome those among them that are present at this Review Conference. The ICRC also very much welcomes the announcement of Oman that it will soon accede to the Convention.

A major achievement of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention over the last decade and a half has been the stigmatization of a weapon that had once been in widespread use, and even States not party have, on the whole, in fact been abiding by most of the Convention's norms. There is virtually no more production or transfer of anti-personnel mines. In the rare instances where they have been used in recent years, such use has been roundly condemned, even when they have been used in States that are not party to the Convention.

It therefore only makes sense for the 36 States that remain outside of the Convention - and which reportedly collectively stockpile tens of millions of mines - to join the treaty at the earliest opportunity and fully implement its comprehensive ban on anti-personnel mines as States Parties. For many of these States, this would represent a relatively small step, since (as we have just said) they are already abiding by most of the Convention's norms. A number of these States are in this room today. They regularly attend the Convention meetings, affirm their support for the Convention's humanitarian goals and provide assistance to mine action programmes worldwide – and in this respect we wish to acknowledge in particular the US and China, while calling on them to accede to the treaty.

Having said this, some States not party continue to invoke narrow security concerns and military interests as reasons for not joining the Convention at this time. This despite the fact – which has been long acknowledged by seasoned military experts, including in a seminal study on the military use and effectiveness of anti-personnel mines commissioned by the ICRC - that the very limited military utility of anti-personnel mines is far outweighed by the appalling humanitarian consequences of their use.

To conclude, we wish to take this opportunity to thank those States Parties that have worked tirelessly over the years to promote universal adherence to the Convention, and in particular we wish to salute the active engagement of Belgium and France in the last year.

We also wish to warmly welcome the appointment of HRH Princess Astrid of Belgium as Special Envoy for the Convention, joining HRH Prince Mired of Jordan whom we thank for his tireless efforts to bring States not party into the Convention's fold. We wish them much success in their efforts to achieve a truly universal treaty, the ultimate stepping-stone to a world free of anti-personnel mines.