

**Intersessional meeting of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC)
25-26 June 2015, Geneva.**

UNIVERSALIZATION- STATEMENT BY BELGIUM

elements

Although 162 countries have already formally agreed to be bound by the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, 35 states still remain outside its remit.

In the framework of its current universalization efforts, the Belgian Presidency of the Convention has therefore undertaken demarches in the last six months vis-à-vis Bahrein, Mongolia, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates. These states were identified as potential candidates for accession to the Convention in the short-term.

The demarche to Mongolia took place in February in Beijing. The Mongolian authorities informed us that the national position is being developed by the Ministry of Defense. The demarche to Sri Lanka happened in May via the Belgian Embassy in New Delhi and will be repeated at the occasion of a visit of our ambassador to Colombo. Sri Lanka signaled that it would communicate about this matter by means of its Representation in Geneva. The demarche to Bahrein was effectuated in March via our embassy in Kuwait. An invitation to join the Convention was delivered to the United Arab Emirates by HRH Princess Astrid and our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Didier Reynders, during an economic mission in March. We currently await formal responses and will inform the MSP about it in November.

Belgium plans to convene an informal contact group meeting on universalization later this year in Geneva ahead of the MSP. Invitations will be sent to all States Parties.

The APMBC is a multi-faceted endeavor. The need for further universalization constitutes one of its aspects. Moreover, further universalization is needed – not only to make sure that those States Parties which are still outside the remit of the Convention will eventually behave to the letter and the spirit of the Convention but also in order to bring non States Parties and actors closer to the Convention.

Finally, Belgium would like to express its sincere appreciation to all States Parties, Personalities and non-governmental actors that have tirelessly invested in the cause of universalization.
