

## Notes for ICRC intervention on universalisation

### Standing Committee on General Status

Monday, 20 June 2011

Thank you Mr. Co-chair,

The International Committee of the Red Cross would like to thank HRH Prince Mired for his relentless efforts in his role of special envoy on universalisation. We would also like to pay a special tribute to Canada for its work in pursuance of this cause and for having led the Universalisation Contact Group for more than a decade. We are grateful to Belgium for having accepted to lead the universalisation efforts and we look forward to work with our Belgium colleagues.

As we often said, universal adherence to this convention and the norms it contains is indispensable in today's world. Last year, Canada stated that full universalisation must be our goal if we are to finally rid the world of these horrific weapons. As Canada put it, the establishment of a norm that use of anti-personnel landmines is **almost** non-existent is not enough. It went on to say: 'In reality, many States that have not acceded to the Convention are prepared to use AP mines, many of their armies regularly train with AP mines and they continue to pose a threat to people around the world'. Recent events seem to have illustrated this very important point.

Like others today, the ICRC is very concerned by a variety of reports alleging the use of AP mines in Libya in the past few months. The use of AP mines in populated areas can have devastating effects on the civilian population and obstruct economic development and reconstruction. We hope that, at the end of the current armed conflict, all parties in Libya could be in a position to conclude that these insidious weapons must be eradicated by joining this important convention.

We would also like to welcome the interventions this morning from States not parties to the Mine Ban Convention. In particular, we are encouraged to have heard from Tuvalu, Laos PDR and Morocco. We welcome the filing by Morocco and Laos PDR of a voluntary transparency report under article 7 of the Convention.

We hope that Laos PDR will intensify its efforts towards accession and be in a position to announce specific steps towards accession at the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties.

We are pleased to hear from both Poland and Finland that preparations are on track for ratification in 2012. We look forward to welcoming them as full partners in this historic endeavor.

The adherence of all States to the Mine Ban Convention remains a priority for the ICRC. We are continuing our efforts to promote the universalisation of the Convention in bilateral contacts we have with national authorities of States not party to the Convention. Since our last meeting, we conducted such bilateral discussions in particular in Mongolia, Nepal, the USA, Poland, FSM, Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands. We were also able to discuss the Mine Ban Convention individually with 10 ASEAN countries during the 3<sup>rd</sup> South Asian International Humanitarian Law meeting held in February 2011.

In closing, we urge all States Parties to fulfill their commitment under the Cartagena Action Plan to 'seize every opportunity to promote' the Convention and its norms. We urge States, in particular, to systematically promote adherence to this Convention in meetings at Ministerial level and above. In many of the States remaining outside of the Convention it is this level engagement and not only working level discussions that are now required.