

## **Notes for ICRC intervention on "Universalisation"**

### **Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention Monday 25 May 2009**

Thank you Mr. Co-Chair.

On behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross, let me begin by welcoming the interventions this morning from the President, the Co-Chairs, the Coordinator of the Universalisation Contact Group, other States and organizations, as well as the ICBL, on their important efforts to promote universalisation. We hope that all States not parties will continue to review their policies and that a way can be found to overcome remaining obstacles in the near future, in particular for those States that have indicated that they might be close to accession.

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 that we have with national authorities in States not party to the Convention, during high-level meetings between the ICRC Presidency and representatives of these States and by highlighting this subject during events that we organize or participate in with relevant States. This year, this includes participation in the regional workshops organized by the ISU, with the support of the European Union, which serve an important purpose in promoting universalisation. To complement the other resources we have developed to promote universalisation, including a ratification kit, we have just produced a booklet containing the treaty text, with a foreword by the ICRC President. This booklet is available in English, French and Spanish and shortly in Russian and Arabic. Copies can be found on the tables outside the room. The ICRC is ready to provide further information, legal advice and support to any State considering adherence to the treaty.

We urge all States that are considering joining this exceptional humanitarian treaty -- to do so as soon as possible, and we hope to be able to welcome some new States Parties at the Second Review Conference. We also encourage all States not parties to consider joining States Parties in Cartagena as observers. In this regard, we urge States Parties to use all relevant opportunities between now and the Review Conference, in particular ministerial-level meetings with States not parties, to promote adherence to the Convention.

Beyond the goal of promoting adherence by all States to the Convention, an understanding is emerging among States Parties that "universalisation" also implies the universal observance of the anti-personnel mine ban norm by non-state armed groups. This broader understanding of universalisation is reflected in Action #7 of the Nairobi Action Plan. To achieve the ultimate goal of ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines, the ICRC believes it is important to continue to promote adherence to the treaty's norms by non-state armed groups. It is also important to support, as called for in Action #46 of the Nairobi Action Plan, mine action to assist affected populations in areas under the control of such actors.

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