

Intervention from Sylvie Brigot-Vilain

ICBL-CMC Executive Director

20th anniversary informal session

11th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

30 November 2011

Merci monsieur le Président,

Et merci au Cambodge de nous offrir cet extraordinaire après midi pour partager avec vous tous ici ce que fut la route qui nous a menés à l'interdiction des mines antipersonnel.

Beaucoup d'émotion et de force peuvent être tirées de ces différentes interventions et tableaux, présentées par deux incroyables maitres de cérémonie.

Cette même émotion et cette même force partagées par tous ceux qui ont eu la chance de rejoindre d'une façon ou d'une autre ce mouvement au cours de ces 20 années, du côté de la société civile bien sûr, mais tout autant auprès des diplomates, dont beaucoup nous ont confiés que le travail sur la Convention avait été l'une des plus riche et gratifiante période de leur carrière.

Monsieur le Président vous avez tiré les leçons des ces 20 ans pour que nous puissions les utiliser dans le futur. Je pense en fait que nous pouvons garantir le succès de la Convention si nous appliquons ces leçons.

As we are seeing this week we have a number of important challenges we still need to meet to reach a mine free world.

The partnership between states, civil society, the ICRC and the UN needs to remain at the very heart of our daily work on the convention, all of us in our respective country.

This demanding partnership, built and strengthened throughout the years, is the central feature of this movement. It has been reproduced to create even more protection for civilians with the ban on cluster munitions. This has been said, and will be repeated again, and that is great... this partnership works. If we nurture it, it will continue to deliver these great results that bring real changes in the life of the people affected by landmines.

Because we all know getting the ban is only the very first step on the road. Implementing it will make the true difference. This is a long term job, considered by many far less interesting and attractive, but this is the most rewarding.

Let us never lose sight of the very reasons why “we do what we do”, as Sister Denise says, this convention is a treasure because it banned landmines, AND demands the land is cleared and survivors see their rights respected, their needs met.

We must soldier on our commitment towards survivors and people who still have to live on mined land because they have no other choice.

We must build on what we have collectively created: a different way of changing practice and policies to respond to imperative humanitarian needs.

The ICBL will be 20 years old next year. While we certainly hope that our work will, at some point, not be needed any more, we are not there yet.

It is our commitment to continue engaging constructively, but forcefully, with you all, and be challenged as well to improve our contribution to the work of the Mine Ban Treaty.

My personal commitment to ban antipersonnel landmines was born in a quiet library in La Sorbonne in Paris when I learned in the books, how Cambodia was just starting to recover from decades of conflicts that left behind a torn apart country, a devastated society, millions of landmines Cambodians would have to suffer from, for many years to come, and already so many survivors. It was in 1993.

I then had the privilege to learn a lot from them when I joined the ICBL and started working with the Cambodian gang as Sister Denise often calls the landmines survivors and advocates here.

Their determination, expertise, but also their courage and creativity, together with those of the many other campaigners in the ICBL have forged my conviction that together we made wonders and should certainly continue to do so.