

**STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE 11TH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO AP MINE BAN CONVENTION, 2 TO 5 DECEMBER 2013**

**UNIVERSALISATION**

**(Check against delivery)**

Thank you, Mr President

The AP Mine Ban Convention is the most comprehensive international instrument for ridding the world of the scourge of anti-personnel mines. Since its entry into force, this Convention has made significant gains in addressing challenges relating to landmines. First, the Convention has established a norm in the field of disarmament and international humanitarian law. This is evident in the fact that there are fewer countries that have been reported to be involved in production of mines. Secondly, there has been no need for States Parties to invoke the treaty's formal compliance provisions to clarify any compliance matters. Thirdly, millions of stockpiled mines have been destroyed in more than 80 countries. Last but not least, more victims are benefiting from the victim assistance programmes in the form of medical care, education, training, physical rehabilitation, social services and employment.

Mr President

Despite the significant progress that has been made, there are still a number of challenges that lie ahead of us. In this regard, my country is concerned about the lack of further progress towards the Universalisation of the Convention. We are satisfied that a growing number of States which are not parties to the Convention are generally adhering to the norms established by the Convention. However, we remain particularly concerned about a number of States that continue to hold significant stockpiles of anti-personnel mines and have yet to join the Convention. Universalisation should therefore remain one of our priorities. In this connection, we would like to congratulate and welcome Poland, which has become a new State Party in June this year. My delegation would like to assure of its full support and cooperation.

Mr President

We would like to commend the High Level envoy on Universalisation, His Royal Highness, Prince Mired Raad Al Hussein of Jordan for his good work and tireless efforts in consulting the non-States Parties with a view to convincing them to join the Convention. We would also like to express our appreciation to Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium and Colombian artist Juanes for their commitment to engage in high level promotion of the Convention. Furthermore, we would like to thank Belgium's ongoing efforts as the Coordinator of the informal Universalisation Contact Group as well as all the unsung heroes and heroines who continue to make a difference to those who are affected by landmines.

I thank you