

15MSP Santiago Chile
28 November 2016

Madam President,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

I would like to begin my speech by relaying to you all the best wishes of His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan and that of the people of Jordan. I would like to also convey my sincere thanks and gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Chile for the very warm hospitality afforded to my delegation and me. It is a great delight to be here in beautiful Santiago and to participate in the **15th Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC**. I wish to wholeheartedly commend the government and people of Chile for their support and commitment towards this noble cause. I also would like to unreservedly congratulate the Chilean Mine Action Program for successfully embracing the concept of 'National Ownership' in all its elements...in its approach to mine action. Bravo to you all for the work that is being done in Chile!! It is of course at the end of the day all about saving lives and protecting the environment for future generations.

In my country Jordan, we once upon time had 500 minefields polluting our sacred land that contained

over 300,000 landmines...our land that was and still is the 'Holy Land.' The vast majority of these minefields were planted along our border areas some forty-nine years ago and earlier by our military. Our late King however, HM King Hussein bin Talal – God Bless His Soul - ordered the Jordanian military to begin clearing these minefields in 1993. He had come to realize the horrendous impact of landmines and took the decision to demine regardless of the political consequences. It was something that His Majesty believed had to be done for the betterment of his people. So for us in Jordan the process started twenty-three years ago and we officially declared completion in 2012. Of course in comparison to other mine-affected countries the problem that Jordan faced was relatively miniscule, however the impact was significant.

Despite our success in demining, we do still face challenges on the VA front. Jordan is unfortunately a member of the 'club of 26 states'...states that have reported to have hundreds or thousands of survivors. We have provided assistance to our survivors in various forms and will continue to do so...but more and more we will integrate our efforts into a broader national disability framework. In addition to my responsibility as the Chairman of the 'National Committee for Demining & Rehabilitation,' I am also the President of Jordan's

‘Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities.’ So the challenge that I am personally facing is how to sync the demands of the CRPD and the APMBC in a way that effectively address the needs...and rights...of all persons with disabilities...without diluting the attention that landmine survivors deserve.

At the Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities we have for the past two years been drafting a new piece of legislation (that will very soon be legislated in our new parliament) that will put the kingdom more on par with the CRPD. I am proud to say that it is one of the most forward looking and ambitious laws that that my country has ever seen. The new law stipulates a move away from the medical approach towards adopting a human rights based approach in dealing with disability. We are no longer talking about charity! We believe it is the inalienable right of all persons with disabilities, including landmine and UXO survivors, to pursue an education, find a decent job, raise a family, receive good healthcare, access public transportation, live independently, to cast a vote, to enjoy sports and recreation, etcetera...etcetera. In short, we believe it is incumbent upon us all to fight and denounce all types of discrimination and stereotyping against persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities must NOT be marginalised or excluded from

society...that is the bottom line! They must enjoy their rights just like anybody else!

As for my efforts vis-à-vis universalization...it has truly been a great privilege to serve you the States Parties...as a 'Special Envoy' of the 'Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention' alongside Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium. I had the great honor of conducting high-level visits to Mongolia, Tonga, Tuvalu, South Korea, Bahrain, Singapore, Laos, USA, and China (and Finland and Poland when I presided over the 8MSP) to discuss the possibility of accession to the Ottawa Treaty. (And I also made visits to Peru and Ecuador on implementation efforts...doing high level visits to bolster implementation is another important subject matter that I think should also be considered). And in Fiji I had a very interesting meeting a few years ago with the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum to discuss the possibility of convincing some of the Pacific island nations not party to the Convention to accede. In addition, during official visits to Libya (after the revolution) and also to Azerbaijan, I touted the importance of these two countries eventually joining the Treaty.

My conversations with the leaders of these countries... the leaders being the Prime Ministers, Governor Generals, Foreign Ministers, Chiefs of Staff, Members of Parliament, etc....and in one

country a Crown Prince...were enlightening and extremely worthwhile, since for most it was the first time that this topic was ever discussed. I for my part, expressed my opinion how important it is that all nations join the APMBC, and that in my humble view the ultimate decision is NOT a military decision but rather a moral and ethical one that needs to be made.

Regarding universalization...I strongly feel that we the States Parties must be more ambitious. The Convention has been successful for the States Parties but our ultimate goal is to make the APMBC successful globally. For this to happen we must strive to convince the States Not Party to the Convention that have tens of millions of landmines stockpiled, or emplaced in the ground and/or have thousands or tens of thousands of survivors to accede. It is also important that the remaining countries...who have no history with landmines...to join as the Convention needs support and new blood. It is collectively our responsibility to make sure that the Convention stays healthy and vibrant...to keep donors interested and engaged for as long as possible until we reach a point when the Convention's goals have truly been fulfilled. For this to happen...States Parties have to commit more seriously to universalization...putting the issue on the agenda from time to time at high level meetings at the

ministerial level and higher, making demarches, telephone calls etc. Think about it...when was the last time your foreign ministers, or deputy foreign ministers, brought this subject up in a meeting? Or sent a demarche? Or made a telephone call? If it has been a long time or never...then we really have some soul searching to do. I have been attending these conferences since the Nairobi Review Conference of 2004...and for a long time the subject of universalization has sounded like a broken record. Every year we ask each other what has been achieved and the answer has always been illusive. Without an effective comprehensive plan of action on Universalization that all or most States Parties are willing to support there is little or very modest hope of any new results in the future. The bottom line is that we can't expect to have **big** results/achievements on universalization with out putting in a **big** effort. I am happy to do my part and to continue serving as a Special Envoy, if **you** so wish, and I strongly believe in its importance. I personally think that there is still a lot that can be done, doors that can be knocked, telephone calls that can be made to push this issue forward ...however I implore all States Parties to weigh in as well and to seriously support the initiative...otherwise all our efforts will be for naught.

And as a general remark regarding the status of the Convention...I would like to mention that the world has undoubtedly seen a decrease in the use of factory made mines but has also seen an increase in the use of improvised anti-personnel mines. These are also our responsibility. We must therefore be ever more vigilant and strengthen our resolve to confront this issue. We must continue our efforts to ensure that all the progress we have made in developing more efficient methods of work are being implemented. We must ensure that all efforts we put forth in providing assistance to victims makes a sustainable difference in the lives of those that need it most; we must continue our efforts to destroy remaining stockpiled anti-personnel mines and; we must ensure that we continue to get the message to vulnerable populations about the threat of mines to prevent them from innocently treading on these killers.

Before I conclude I would like to say how immensely impressed I have always been and continue to be with the ISU. Juan Carlos and his team are remarkable individuals who must be commended for their professionalism and dedication to the cause that is really unmatched. I honestly believe that for the Convention to stay robust and strong in the long run we **MUST** support the ISU more and make sure that it has ample space to flourish and maneuver. The ISU should not have

to worry about financial constraints...after all the amounts requested by the unit on a yearly basis are relatively modest...considering that it serves 162 States Parties!

In conclusion...I would like to reaffirm my country's unyielding commitment to this noble cause. Even though we declared completion in 2012, we still remain active in 'mine action'...with the hope of focusing more and more in the near future on VA issues, MRE and training. As I mentioned earlier, our journey in mine action started 23 years ago and at times it has been a bumpy ride. But...thank goodness...with the hard work and dedication of all Jordanians who have worked in MA, the input of survivors and with the generosity of donors and partners we have been able to persevere and overcome the challenges. Hence...our humble message to all States Parties is don't lose faith! If Action 21 of the Maputo Action plan that calls for cooperation and partnerships is fully adopted then success will be unavoidable! The task is attainable I believe and ultimately very DOABLE.

I Thank You All.