

Mr. President,

It is truly a great honor for me to present to you this brief statement on universalization. As I mentioned earlier in the week...during my address in the opening session...I have considered it a great privilege to represent this Convention as one of the 'Special Envoys' alongside HRH Princess Astrid.

During the 2nd Review Conference in 2009 in Cartagena the idea of high-level engagement was floated and the Norwegian Presidency at the time promoted and sponsored the idea. The view was, and still is...that if we seriously want to see movement on the universalization front then we must engage States not party at the highest of levels possible...(in addition to grass roots action of course). This was the premise of the whole initiative. And I was happily recruited to fulfill this role by using my position to get my foot in the door and engage governments and decision-makers on this issue. As a result, I conducted over the years missions to the US, China, South Korea, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Tuvalu, Singapore, Tonga and Bahrain. I also conducted separate visits to Libya and Azerbaijan, where I did venture to raise the question regarding possible accession. In addition to the above I also visited Palau to attend a symposium on the contamination in the Pacific left over from WWII...and Fiji where I met with the Pacific Islands Forum to discuss further possible accessions. I also conducted two implementation missions to Ecuador and Peru...two States Parties...to encourage them further to do the good work they are doing.

In all the countries that I have mentioned, I was fortunate to meet with their respective leaders...3 presidents, 1 vice-president, 2 prime ministers, 1 governor general, 1 national security advisor, a crown prince and many ministers, vice-ministers, chiefs of staff and other government and military officials.

What I concluded from all these missions was the reaffirmation of the importance of high-level engagement. The engagement was crucial because I quickly realized that in most countries the issue of landmines was not on the radar screen whatsoever and in many cases it was the first time that the leaders I met were obliged to even consider the issue.

I humbly believe that we should continue with this type of engagement, whether conducted by me, HRH Princess Astrid, or someone else because it is an effective method, alongside other initiatives that should run concurrently in order for more success on the universalization front be attained. A flurry of diplomatic activity and grass roots action should be devised by all those concerned in order to affect real change. Only then will we see more states acceding.

Remember...in the Maputo Action Plan together we agreed to:

- o promote formal adherence to the Convention by States not party to the Convention
- o promote universal observance of the Convention's norms and objectives and condemn violations
- o coordinate their actions to promote the Convention, including actions taken at a high level, through bilateral contacts and in multilateral fora, and request the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as Depositary, to continue promoting universalization by inviting States not party to join the Convention as soon as possible.

We are at the midway point of implementation of the Maputo Action Plan and must work hard to ensure that we have made progress on these actions.

I am personally grateful for the States Parties having decided in Santiago, Chile, at the 15MSP to establish an informal working group on Universalization to begin coordinating our efforts. We of course also grateful for the Austrian President for having followed through and established this group this year.

We are extremely grateful for the European Union Council Decision that recognizes the importance of Universalization of the Convention and will be supporting the ISU in carrying out important efforts on this area.

We MUST NOT FORGET...that the States not party to the Convention have collectively more than 50 million landmines stockpiled and probably much more than this number in the ground. So in other

words...we have our work cut out for us and must pursue universalization in the near future with great vigor and ambition.

I thank you Mr. President