

**Address to the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties**  
**By Mired Raad Zeid Al-Hussein**  
*Special Envoy of the Convention*

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear friends,

It is with great pleasure that I address you today at the opening of the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties, especially as we look forward towards a Review Conference year in 2019.

I believe that I am one of a small handful of people who has since the Nairobi Review Conference attended all the Meetings of States Parties with the exception of two that I was unable to attend. So I have been lucky in a sense to have tracked the progress of the Convention... or lack thereof in some areas for the last 14 years since 2004.

Anyhow, as we celebrate our success we must take this opportunity to look towards the future. Next year will be an opportunity to continue our efforts, regroup, to refocus and recalibrate our approach.

It is also a time to become bolder and address the international community with the same passion and enthusiasm that we demonstrated in the 1990s. Then, as now, we must say, "enough is enough".

We reacted then to the scourge of anti-personnel mines with an energy that made world leaders turn their heads. Yes we have been successful, yes we have reduced casualties and injuries, yes we are well aware of the methodologies and tools that will get us to the finish line faster and more effectively than ever. We also know the importance of partnerships and the importance of stakeholders, and by this I mean all stakeholders, getting and remaining involved to see that we can meet our goals. But we must do so with a renewed appetite.

And we can do this. I know we can. When I speak to partners such as Norwegian People's Aid, to HALO and the Mines Advisory Group, and our colleagues at the ISU. When I speak to affected and contributing countries I hear the passion and the conviction that is absent from other Conventions and other subject matters. We know what we need to do and we must hold ourselves accountable while keeping the unique spirit of Cooperation and Assistance intact.

We created this Convention to ensure that States will help States achieve our noble goals.

We must not fall into complacency that will allow the Convention to be just another one of those international agreements that lacks gusto. Our success is perhaps today one of our greatest enemies as many are under the impression that we are over the hill and that landmines are 'yesterday's' issue! I don't believe this to be the case whatsoever. The reasons that we are a successful Convention is because we count on the individuals that are on the front lines, individuals who have followed this Convention for the last two decades and individuals who are well aware of the challenges and complexities of implementation.

We must stay creative; stay fresh, allow ourselves to work with the creativity and gall that this

convention is known for. Let us not get stuck in conversations that are not about the core of the Convention's challenges, opportunities, and progress. We do face financial difficulties and these must not be ignored, but they should not cloud our vision and plans for the future. We have too much to do and too many challenges yet to address.

Today, an unfortunate situation exists in which anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature are being used on a larger scale than ever before. We must continue to condemn the use of the anti-personnel mines by any actor as we are committed to do so.

We must strongly urge all mine affected countries to embrace the concept of ownership and to take the issue at hand very seriously; it is the only way, we believe, that true progress will be realized.

We strongly urge all mine-affected countries that have sought and attained extensions on their Article 5 obligations to do their utmost and to stick to their respective deadlines. Not 'being on track' is not a good thing! Not good for you and not good for the Convention as a whole.

We strongly urge States Parties that have stockpile destruction deadlines and or those who are in violation to just get it done.

We strongly urge States Parties with significant numbers of survivors to honestly and wholeheartedly embrace the needs of the survivors directly and more broadly as they are stated in this Convention and in more detail in the CRPD.

*If I were to hazard a guess, I believe that the majority of survivors around the world still feel that their basic needs have not been met and that they have yet to be afforded their rights as equal citizens with others.*

As for States that have not yet acceded, we urge you to revisit your policies, to review your reasoning for remaining outside the scope of this very noble convention and engage with us in a discussion that could enable your policy makers to better understand the importance of our joint venture in banning these long lasting indiscriminate weapons of war.

I want to thank all of you for the opportunity to address you and am looking forward to continue contributing to the work of the Convention and to the strengthening of our efforts towards ensuring a successful Review Conference Year next year.