

**Statement of Canada**  
**7th Meeting of States Parties**  
**21 September 2006**

Update from the Coordinator of the Universalization Contact Group

Thank you

It is Canada's pleasure to report that four states ratified the Convention since the end of the Sixth Meeting of the States Parties in December, 2005. Ukraine, a country with considerable stockpiled mines, was welcomed into the Convention on 27 December, 2005; despite its challenging circumstances, Haiti made the Ottawa Convention a priority by ratifying on 15 February; one month later on 15 March, the Cook Islands deposited its instrument of ratification. Finally Brunei Darussalam followed suit on 24 April, becoming the one-hundred fifty-first State to accept the obligations adhere to the Ottawa Convention.

Canada congratulates these four countries on their ratification. It is notable that, of the 122 countries who signed the Convention in 1997, only three have yet to ratify, Indonesia, the Marshall Islands and Poland. It is our hope that these signatories will soon be welcomed as States Parties to the Convention.

The European Union's commitment of support for the destruction of Ukraine's stockpiled mines was critical in facilitating its entry into the Convention. We encourage the EU to place similar emphasis on bringing into the Convention Finland and Poland, the only two of its member-states that have not yet joined. States Parties from the region are urged to take advantage of all bilateral and multilateral opportunities to urge these two states to ratify or accede to the Convention, to bring Europe to full universalization.

Canada also welcomes the statements made by States Parties at the 6 MSP and at the intersessional meetings in May on the importance States Parties place on universalization of the Convention and would urge all States Parties to work diligently to encourage accession by the 20% of the world that has not yet chosen to be bound by the obligations of this Convention.

We must continue our collective effort to universalize the Convention in keeping with our commitment. I recall the preamble which states in part "*Emphasizing the desirability of attracting the adherence of all States to this Convention, and determined to work strenuously towards the promotion of its universalization in all relevant fora*" and the Nairobi Action plan where we all agreed that for the period 2005 to 2009, universal adherence will remain an important object of cooperation among States Parties.

We further committed to eight specific action items to advance universalization – specifically we agreed that all States Parties will:

*“Call on those States that have not yet done so, to accede to the Convention as soon as possible,*

*Persistently encourage those signatories of the Convention that have not yet done so to ratify it as soon as possible,*

*Attach priority to effectively addressing universalization challenges presented by States not parties, and in particular those that continue to use, produce, or possess large stockpiles of anti-personnel mines,*

*Accord particular importance to promoting adherence in regions where the level of acceptance of the Convention remains low,*

*Seize every appropriate opportunity to promote adherence to the Convention in bilateral contacts, military-to-military dialogue, peace processes, national parliaments, and the media, including by encouraging States not parties to abide by its provisions pending their adherence to the Convention,*

*Actively promote adherence to the Convention in all relevant multilateral fora, including the UN Security Council, UN General Assembly, assemblies of regional organizations and relevant disarmament bodies,*

*Continue promoting universal observance of the Convention's norms, by condemning, and taking appropriate steps to end the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines by armed non-state actors,*

*Encourage and support involvement and active cooperation in these universalization efforts by all relevant partners, including the United Nations and the UN Secretary General, other international institutions and regional organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and other non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians and interested citizens.”*

Of course we all recognize that States not party may not be in a position to accede immediately and welcome the steps that have been made or will be made towards accepting all of the obligations. A number of States Parties chose to submit voluntary Article 7 reports as a first step before they acceded or ratified and we particularly would like to recognize Poland's regular and continued reporting. In 2005, China and Mongolia were identified as non-party States that had expressed an interest in submitting voluntary Article 7 transparency reports. Unfortunately to date, neither has indicated a firm timeline for the submission of reports.

In June 2005, Sri Lanka submitted a report that did not include information regarding stockpiled mines, and has been encouraged to resubmit the completed report.

We would like to continue to encourage States not party to submit a complete voluntary Article 7 transparency report as a step towards membership to the Convention, but add that this measure should be taken with the intent of moving more rapidly toward accession or ratification.

Since December 2005, there have been several activities to promote adherence to the Convention. The President of the Sixth Meeting of the States Parties wrote letters to all the States that remain outside the Convention, encouraging them to ratify or accede to it as soon as possible. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines held youth workshops in Egypt and Lebanon which were well-attended by civil society, government officials, and the diplomatic community. Additionally the ICBL undertook a diplomatic mission to Lebanon which was very well received but given recent events in Lebanon may need further follow-up. Canada undertook missions to India and Pakistan in March, providing a valuable opportunity to engage their governments. Visits to Brunei by the ICBL, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Implementation Support Unit proved critical in bringing this signatory on board. The States Parties are encouraged to follow-up on these activities where an opportunity exists.

At one hundred fifty one members, we have come a long way in universalizing the Convention. However, many of the holdout states are significant cases. Among them are: ten countries that have used mines since the Ottawa Convention entered into force in 1999; at least fourteen countries that maintain their ability to produce mines; and nine countries that are thought to have stockpiles in excess of 1 million mines. This is in addition to the continued use of mines by a large number of non-state actors, highlighting the need to ensure universal adherence to the norms of the Convention.

We note in particular that Landmine Monitor reports three States not Party have used mines in the past year, specifically Burma, Nepal and the Russian Federation and would like to encourage them too, to accept the international norm of non-use. In the case of Nepal it should be noted that an agreement on the non use of mines formed a part of the recent cease fire agreement which continues to reinforce the fact that this Convention also serves as a confidence building measure.

If there is any doubt that universalization needs to remain a priority, let us be reminded of the words we all endorsed in the Nairobi Action Plan: *"the only guarantee that the significant disarmament and humanitarian advances to date will endure, and that a world free of anti-personnel mines will be ultimately realised, will lie in the achievement of universal adherence to the Convention and implementation of its comprehensive ban."* The tremendous effort required to clear all mined areas, destroy stocks and assist survivors must be undertaken alongside efforts to promote universalization of the Convention and its norms. Only then can we ensure that mines will never again be laid and claim yet more victims.

We note that a number of States Parties have underlined the importance of universalization during statements at the Sixth Meeting of the States Parties. These positive words are appreciated, and it is our sincere hope that these promising words are

being supported by concrete action. More effort by a larger number of States Parties could take us much further in promoting universalization than a great effort by few States. The impetus to pursue a universal ban needs to rise from and be championed by States Parties and multilateral organizations in regions where the rate of adherence remains low. This cannot be the effort of a handful of states – it must be the collective effort of all States Parties working together in mutual support of one another. Canada would be pleased to discuss with individual States Parties ways to coordinate our efforts to engage States outside the Convention.

Finally, the Universalization Contact Group will meet today (this Thursday) at one o'clock in Salle VIII. A light lunch will be served. All are welcome and encouraged to participate.

Thank you.