

ICBL Intervention on Universalization
Delivered by Simona Beltrami, ICBL Advocacy Director
7th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
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Thank you, Madame President,

Over the past year, the ICBL network has continued to work hard to make the vision of a world free of the suffering of antipersonnel mines a reality for all.

Universalization of the Mine Ban Treaty and the cessation of the use of anti-personnel mines by all actors still employing them are vital preconditions for this to happen.

With this in mind, since the Sixth MSP, the ICBL, along with its national campaigns and member organizations has been engaging – as it has done for years - with a number of countries. These include signatories Brunei (which eventually ratified in April 2006), Indonesia and Poland. National campaigns with the support of the ICBL have been engaging with governments in states still listed by the Landmine Monitor as users, producers and/or stockpilers of anti-personnel mines such as India, Nepal, Pakistan and the United States. In Nepal, the local campaign played an important role in including a provision prohibiting new mine use in the code of conduct agreed by the government and Maoist groups – a significant step considering that Nepal was listed in the Landmine Monitor as one of the last three states using landmines in 2005-2006.

Despite the many efforts carried out by the ICBL network, the ICRC and some States Parties coordinating their actions in the framework of the universalization contact group led by Canada, in the past twelve months we have had only a few occasions for celebration. Four states – all of them signatories – have joined the treaty in this period: Brunei, Cook Islands, Haiti, and Ukraine. And in a welcome development, the number of States not Parties voting in favour of the United Nations General Assembly resolution on universalization of the Mine Ban Treaty has risen to 24, including Azerbaijan and China who had abstained in previous years. A majority of States not Parties now support the resolution, indicating their intent to join the Mine Ban Treaty in the future,

However, the pace of universalization has slowed down in recent years and increased engagement is needed, including from States Parties, who have committed to promoting the treaty through actions 1 to 8 of the Nairobi Action Plan. We have entered a tougher phase in terms of universalization, but information contained in the Landmine Monitor Report, detailing small but steady advances in several States Parties demonstrates that engagement pays off. This week we have welcomed the announcement of one such step: the submission of a voluntary transparency report by Morocco, and we have heard about progress in various other countries we are engaging with. We therefore welcome wholeheartedly the President's commitment and the submission of an action plan for universalization and we call on States Parties to renew their efforts to persuade countries remaining outside the treaty to take interim steps, including voting in favour of the UNGA resolution, and eventually join the treaty.

More and more often, we hear States not parties saying that they are acting in *de facto* compliance with the treaty. But the mine ban community cannot and must not settle for that, as it usually means that the country wants to be able to use anti-personnel mines in the future or does not intend to remove its existing minefields.

With this in mind, we shall continue to engage governments in the lead up to the 8th Meeting of States Parties, with special focus on the region which is likely to host it and where universalization is still a formidable challenge: the Middle East. We will also continue to focus on other areas where treaty membership levels remain particularly low and where anti-personnel mines continue to be used, produced and stockpiled in large quantities, such as South and East Asia and the CIS: ICBL plans include advocacy visits to countries in the Middle East – and especially the Gulf – ongoing engagement at national level through the work of local campaigns, and efforts to achieve ratification by the remaining signatories.

Madame President, we have come three quarters of the way to achieving universalization of the treaty. The last mile might well be the hardest mile, but with sustained and coordinated work and increased engagement on the part of States Parties, we can reach the goal. People living in mine affected areas and landmine survivors deserve no less.

Thank you.