

**HIS MAJESTY KING ABDULLAH II'S
REMARKS TO THE OPENING CEREMONY
OF THE
8TH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE MINE BAN CONVENTION**

***(DELIVERED BY CHIEF CHAMBERLAIN HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
PRINCE RA'AD BEN ZEID)***

**JORDAN
17 NOVEMBER 2007**

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim;

Your Royal Highness Princess Astrid,

Your Royal Highnesses,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies & Gentlemen:

Thank you very much. On behalf of His Majesty King Abdullah II, allow me to welcome all of you to Jordan. Our country is honored to host this 8th Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention. It is especially meaningful to welcome you, in the tenth anniversary year of the signing of this historic treaty.

My friends,

The Mine Ban Convention came into effect faster than any such treaty in history – expressing the unprecedented, global response to the threat of landmines. But as great as that achievement was, the implementation work that has followed has been just as remarkable. Because of this effort, what began on paper is becoming a reality for millions of people. Land once poisoned by mines, has been opened for farming, development, and community life and futures for so many are being changed.

Such progress is a credit to the champions of mine action – you, and your colleagues across the world. In Jordan, our national efforts and international role have been guided by His Royal Highness Prince Mired Bin Raad and his stellar team, who deserve our gratitude. Throughout this room are many more who have helped their countries and others succeed.

There is much work still to be done. Let us begin this meeting by celebrating how much has been achieved – and allow that success to show us the way forward. Our success requires humanitarian vision and political will. The unity of the international community – governments and civil society – in strong, committed partnerships. A planning process that aims at practical, measurable results. With these strengths, the States Parties can fulfill the promise of the Mines Ban Convention.

My friends,

The cause is great. His Majesty the late King Hussein bin Talal, God rest his soul, used to say, "الإنسان أعلى ما نملك" – “the human being is our most precious resource.” This is the spirit that guides Jordan’s commitment to the Mines Ban Convention. And it is our sincere hope that more countries will view life through this prism.

In the Middle East, where conflict has caused so much destruction, the work to ban mines and eradicate their threat is a humanitarian imperative. As Jordanians, we have witnessed first-hand the shattering of lives and communities, and know the national burden of these decades-old threats. We reject the military utility of landmines, weapons with indiscriminate targets and a long, hidden lifetime – often victimizing the poorest and most vulnerable. In Jordan, we believe that landmines have no place in our world.

Across the globe, we must send a message, to all who are still in danger: we will go forward until the landmines are gone ... and we will restore the land to health and productivity, not only for future generations, but for this generation. We must also send a message to the survivors of landmines: that we are committed to helping them build

futures of opportunity and hope. With the passage of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, landmine victims must be afforded their right to a dignified and productive life.

The onus is on us for concrete results, measured in terms of the strength of our commitment to fulfill our obligations under the Mine Ban Convention.

Eradicating landmines and the pain and suffering that they cause is a fight that can be won. We are well on our way to a time when landmines are no longer news, but past history. And the work of your group will live on, as a model of how creative and courageous partnerships can produce tremendous outcomes.

My friends:

On behalf of His Majesty, I wish you success in your deliberations and discussions this coming week. I am confident that you and your colleagues will help our world meet the challenges that still lie ahead. And doing so, you will bring millions of people closer to a better future, a future of peace and hope.

Thank you very much.

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