



'ending the suffering caused
by anti-personnel mines'
ap mine ban convention

**Statement by the President of the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties
His Royal Highness, Prince Mired Raad Al-Hussein of Jordan**

18 November 2007

Your Royal Highness, Excellencies, Friends:

Please accept my gratitude for the confidence that you have expressed in me.

It is an honour to have been elected to serve as your President, particularly during the tenth anniversary year of the Convention.

It is also a challenge to follow in the foot steps of Her Excellency, Ambassador Caroline Millar of Australia.

Caroline – we are all indebted to you...

- ...for incredible leadership you provided at the 7MSP and since...
- ...for your enthusiasm and activism in promoting universalization and implementation of the Convention, and...
- ...for providing me with such strong support and sage advice in the period leading up to this meeting.

I am conscious that I have big shoes to fill.

But I am also excited about the opportunities that lie before us.

This meeting is taking place two months after the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention in Oslo and just days before the 10th anniversary of the Convention's signing ceremony.

And this is the first time that the international community has gathered in the Middle East to address head-on the human suffering caused by anti-personnel mines.

This suggests, first, that the opportunity exists to reinvigorate interest globally in the landmine problem and the approach taken through the Convention to address this problem.

The Convention might be 10 years old, but to mine-affected States such as Jordan, and, to the men, women and children affected by the existing or potential impacts of anti-personnel mines, this is a problem to be solved once and for all.

Let us use this meeting to recommit to the tasks that remain.

Second, the opportunity exists to increase interest in the Convention in this region.

In this regard, I am pleased that in recent months Iraq and Kuwait have agreed to join our common cause.

I hope that an international gathering of this type and magnitude taking place in the Middle East for the first time will catalyze further acceptance of the Convention by States in this region.

Third, this meeting – hosted by a mine-affected State Party – provides the opportunity to highlight the reality of the challenges faced in implementation and creative, cost-effective and efficient ways to overcome these challenges.

As we proceed this week to capitalize on these opportunities, let us remember that this Convention's meetings are of a fundamentally different nature than the meetings of many other multilateral instruments, including the meetings in which many of you may have participated in Geneva last week.

The Convention's high standard was negotiated ten years ago.

Hence, our meetings are concerned with implementation, not negotiation.

A world where implementation matters most may not be familiar territory for many of my Geneva-based friends whose professional lives are dominated by negotiations.

But overcoming the painstaking challenges of implementation is, for many present this week, a hard reality. And our ability to overcome these challenges will be the real measure of success of the Convention.

To the tens of thousands of women, men and children whose lives have been irreversibly changed by injuries caused by landmines...

...to the hundreds of thousands living in communities still affected by mines, and...

...to the millions who on 18 September 1997 were provided with hope that there would, one day, be a conclusive end to the suffering, it's not what we say, but what we do, that matters.

And so the centre piece of this meeting should be a comprehensive stocktaking of action – of progress made and challenges that remain in the pursuit of our common purpose.

And a clear measure of success of this meeting should relate to how practical we are in identifying ways to overcome our challenges.

I am hopeful, for instance, that a practical minded spirit will prevail on Tuesday when we tackle two particular pressing challenges – the challenge of more rapidly and efficiently releasing suspected hazardous areas, and, the challenge of ensuring a sustainable resource flow.

Before we get down to the business before us, please accept my thanks for traveling, in some instances over vast distances, to come to the Dead Sea for this meeting.

I am proud of the efforts of my colleagues and friends from the National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation for having already provided you with a warm Jordanian welcome and for their tireless efforts in organizing this meeting.

Together we hope that you will enjoy your time in Jordan and that once our work is done you will be able to experience the wonders of our beautiful country.