



# Press Release



## Special envoy Princess Astrid of Belgium welcomes Oman's decision to join the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

*Muscat, Brussels 19 March 2014* – Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium, in her capacity as a special envoy of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or Ottawa Convention, has welcomed the decision of the Sultanate of Oman to join the treaty that bans the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel mines.

Princess Astrid, while on a trade mission to Oman, met with the Sultanate's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Youssef bin Alawi bin Abdullah, to encourage Oman to further its engagement in the international movement to eradicate anti-personnel mines by joining the landmark disarmament and humanitarian treaty.

Oman's Minister of Foreign Affairs responded to Princess Astrid's appeal by informing her that the Sultanate had taken the decision to join the Convention.

Princess Astrid welcomed Oman's decision. "Accession to the Convention by yet another state in the Persian Gulf will help strengthen the movement to eradicate anti-personnel mines not only in the region but in the rest of the world and ensure the Convention's continued effectiveness," said Princess Astrid.

"Every new accession is important," added Princess Astrid. "There is no conceivable utility of anti-personnel mines that could outweigh and justify the devastating humanitarian cost of these weapons."

Oman has in recent years attended the Convention's formal meetings as an observer and had publicly expressed that it shared "wholeheartedly in the aims of the campaign for a total global ban." The *Landmine Monitor* reports that Oman has never produced or exported anti-personnel mines and that it has not bought or used landmines in almost two decades.

Princess Astrid announced in 2013 that she would join in European Union-sponsored, worldwide efforts to promote the humanitarian aims of the Convention at a high level. In addition to Princess Astrid, Prince Mired of Jordan and Colombian landmine advocate and Grammy-award winner Juanes have joined these efforts. Since 2000, Princess Astrid has represented Belgium in several of the Convention's formal meetings including in Geneva, Thailand, Jordan and Colombia. Belgium was one of the first countries to call for a total ban on landmines and join the Convention.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was adopted in Oslo in 1997, opened for signature in Ottawa the same year and entered into force on 1 March 1999. Since entering into force, millions of square metres of once dangerous lands have been released for normal human activity and over 44.5 million stockpiled mines have been destroyed.

###

For press information, contact: Laila Rodriguez +41 (0) 22 730 93 50, [press@apminebanconvention.org](mailto:press@apminebanconvention.org). Find the Convention on the [web](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) or [Twitter](#).

**Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit**