

Standing Committee on General Status and Operation of the Convention
June 25, 2010
Report of the Meeting of the Universalization Contact Group

Thank-you Mr. Co-Chair

Canada was pleased to host the Universalization Contact Group meeting on Thursday of this week. The Universalization Contact Group's aim is to bring together interested States Parties, International Organizations and Civil Society to find and share ways to encourage adherence to the Ottawa Convention and to bring in new States Parties. This group is open to all interested parties and we were pleased to have a fruitful discussion.

The meeting provided an opportunity to update participants on universalization activities that took place between the Second Review Conference and these Intersessional Standing Committee Meetings – many of those were reported on Monday so I will not reiterate them now. I will however, make note of some of the key lessons learned shared by members. Firstly, we noted the importance of continuing engagement with States not party. It is essential that while regional workshops such as the ones held last year along the road to Cartagena continue to be an important forum for discussion and engagement, we must follow-up such activities by making use of every opportunity in our regular bilateral and multilateral contacts. Secondly, the sharing information of universalization activities is an effective way to strengthen and make the best use of follow-up activities by other States or organizations. Thirdly, we noted the importance of making use of available assets including accredited Ambassadors, military-to-military dialogue, political visits and many others. Finally, we reconfirmed that our work must be complimented by engagement at the highest political levels – for this is where the influence is needed –with the key decision makers of the various countries.

We conducted a general review of the situation in the 39 States not party and in our view it is possible to have up to five new members by the 11th Meeting of States Parties with up to 10 more in the next few years. The remaining 24 countries will likely take a longer view.

We noted particularly the serious review of its anti-personnel mine by the United States and the importance of engagement by States Parties. We ask that you think of ways your state or organization could raise the issue with the United States as well as other States not party now and in the future.

We also noted the potential of synergy between universalization work for the Oslo Convention and this one, and expressed the belief that work in that arena will bring new energy to our work.

This week's UCG meeting proved the worth of this platform for discussion as we move forward in our work. Our President's special envoy will continue his efforts at the highest possible level and other universalization actors will continue to support his efforts. That said, our work is now much more difficult and we encourage each State Party to take up their responsibility as stated in the preamble of the Convention *"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."*

Thank you, Mr. Co-Chair