

Second International Pledging Conference for the Implementation of the AP Mine Ban Convention

Statement of the International Committee of the Red Cross

I would like to begin by thanking Austria and the ISU for inviting the ICRC to speak at this important event.

As we saw last year, this international pledging conference is a moment to take stock of where we are in the efforts to rid the world of AP mines. It perhaps takes on even more meaning this year as the 20th anniversary of the Convention approaches. This anniversary provides an opportunity to both look back on what has been accomplished; and at the same time to look forward so as to assess the challenges that remain.

The ICRC believes that today we are closer than ever to reaching the goal of a world free of anti-personnel mines and fulfilling the promises of the Convention. Of course these are not promises that States, diplomats and organizations have made to each other, but promises made to the individuals, families and communities affected by anti-personnel mines. They are a pledge that for once and for all time the threat of death, injury and suffering caused by these weapons will be brought to an end. The importance of this promise cannot be overstated and it should never be forgotten as work advances.

The States Parties to the Convention are to be commended for their commitment to fulfilling these promises. As we know, there has been substantive and tangible accomplishments and progress in mine clearance, stockpile destruction and victim assistance throughout the life of this convention.

The dedication is reflected in the Maputo Declaration where States Parties reaffirmed their commitment to “comply with and complete” their obligations under the Convention and to pledged to meet the principal goals of the Convention “to the fullest extent possible” by 2025. The ICRC warmly welcomed these commitments and calls on States Parties to urgently follow through on them.

Others have spoken about the challenges facing the Convention that must be overcome as States seek to meet the 2025 goal and the political will, effective planning and financial resources necessary to achieve them. So I will not delve further into those issues other than to urge States Parties to ensure that the necessary funding is made available to ensure the fruition of these goals.

One additional challenge that the ICRC would like to draw attention to is the need to continually reinforce the norm against anti-personnel mine use. Unfortunately, there are reports of anti-personnel mines being laid in a number of ongoing conflicts. The ICRC, and I imagine all States Parties, remain concerned about such use. Even more disturbing is the dramatic increase in anti-personnel mine victims over the past year, as reported by the Landmine Monitor. Many States have spoken out about and condemned the ongoing use of AP mines, including Presidents of the MSPs and this it so be commended. We must continue to bring the humanitarian messages of this Convention to those who still employ these weapons in every

possible way and in every possible forum as the use of anti-personnel mines by any actor is unacceptable.

Equally important is the need to promote universalization and bring those few States that remain outside this treaty into its fold. Some are difficult and very reluctant to engage on this issue but others may be more likely to move and as we have seen throughout the course of this treaty, dedication and persistence can bring results.

In closing, reinforcing the norms of the treaty by reacting to reports of use (both new and ongoing) as well promoting the treaty are essential. And actions in these areas need not rely on or absorb significant financial resources. Much can be done in bilateral and diplomatic levels with great effectiveness. At the 15th MSP both Prince Mired and Austria highlighted the need for greater coordination and action on universalization. ICRC can only support those calls and is ready to assist in these efforts. ICRC would also like to take a moment express its gratitude for the outstanding work of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU). We have enjoyed a close and fruitful working relationship with the ISU and look forward to continuing this collaboration in working to meet the goals of the Convention.

Thank you.