

## **ICBL-MAC Statement on Universalization**

Universalizing the convention is how we will forever end the use of landmines but we need to be active in our universalization efforts. Sitting here in plenary waiting for states to join us on the right side of history will not work. Excuses used by certain States in order not to sign the Convention cannot and should not be accepted because mines are proven to have grave humanitarian consequences to people and animals around the world.

We are proudly celebrating how far we have come in clearing the world of mines and explosive remnants of war on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention but at the same time, we are conscious of how far we still have to go. Universalization requires a very strategic, targeted, and persistent approach – collective effort of all relevant partners knocking on the same door with the same message at different times. I and others working to universalize the Treaty in our countries need you, the States Parties, to back us up. We need action not just words to push our countries to join the Treaty. It is for the good of all.

We noticed that there has not been a new state party to the convention in a number of years. Clearly we need to assess the current tactics being used for universalization and try new options. We are facing a rapidly changing world so we need to adapt and innovate to maintain the momentum. The treaty is a good news story that shows the value of multilateralism at a time when global tensions are rising. We should do all we can to strengthen the treaty and its norms. One way we can strengthen the norms of the Treaty is by protesting the use of landmines. The use of landmines is unacceptable. We strongly condemn the use of landmines by Russia and Myanmar and by non-state armed groups. Seeing landmines used on a huge scale in Ukraine and in Myanmar by governments 25 years after the Ottawa Treaty was signed is shocking.

We are only 3 years away from our aspirational 2025 mine-free target. Every single accession is a step for a safer and better world. We urge countries not party to the Convention to acknowledge the damage caused by mines, as well as their social, economic and environmental cost. Mine action lies at the core of the peace and security, humanitarian and development efforts. I would like to remind all of us of the words of the Secretary-General of the United Nations: “Mine action is an investment in humanity and the foundation of lasting peace and sustainable development.”

In conclusion, let me be clear, any use of landmines is unacceptable - these abhorrent weapons should never be used.

Thank you.