

My Dear Friend H.E. Dr. Ly Tuch ... Senior Minister & President of the 5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference,

Dear Friends & Colleagues,

I would like to say a huge big bravo to the Kingdom of Cambodia for hosting us so remarkably in Seim Reap for the 5th Review Conference. I warmly salute H.E. Dr. Tuch and our Cambodian brothers and sisters who have so elegantly and professionally prepared for and are presiding over this important conference. Congratulations to everyone!

Warm greetings to you all ... it is so good to see so many old acquaintances ... some of you I have known for almost 20 years. My first introduction to the landmine issue was two decades ago when I headed the Jordanian delegation to the 1<sup>st</sup> Review Conference in Nairobi, Kenya. It was my first dive into the world of mine action and ever since then it has been a central part of

my life. Nairobi was special for Jordan, because it marked the beginning of our renewed effort to push ahead and fulfill our solemn promises vis-à-vis the Convention.

I had my doubts in the beginning whether or not we could get it done. However, my colleagues and I had an abundance of determination and we knew full well that we would only make noticeable headway if and only if we adopted a very serious approach that garnered all the elements of ownership. For us in Jordan, that was the key to our eventual success. We understood that if we took full ownership of the problem and really owned it, then others would rally around us to help. As a result, we tried very hard to tick all the boxes. We beefed up our civilian-led national demining authority (NCDR: The National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation), we created a new board of directors with members that had a wealth of experience and were full of energy, we drafted a new mine action strategy plus an action plan with all the relevant stakeholders, we hired capable new and talented staff, we examined all the existing

data and maps and thoroughly evaluated the integrity of all the information, we listened carefully to our UNDP technical advisor who was truly indispensable, and lastly we were totally transparent and forthcoming with the donor community. Once we took all these necessary steps things started to fall into place and we were on our way.

In fact, we became so gung-ho about the matter that we even broke with tradition and invited NPA (The Norwegian People's Aid) to come to Jordan and assist us with our demining effort ... which in retrospect was the best decision we ever made ... as their input was tremendous and rapidly increased the velocity of the clearance.

We also threw our hat into the race, and agreed to preside over and host the 8MSP in Jordan in 2007, by the shores of the Dead Sea ... which turned out not only to be a resounding success for my country, but a critical event that highlighted the magnitude of the problem throughout the MENA region.

I say all of this dear friends without any pretension, but rather to very humbly illustrate that our cause (by **our** cause I mean **OUR CAUSE** ... all of us here today) is a **doable** cause. All that is needed is the political will to get it done, the ownership that ties all the strings together, and the excitement to implement as speedily as possible. We must be serious about mine action ... the key word here is 'serious!'

Gone are the days of making big outlandish promises that are never fulfilled. We owe it to our landmine victims ... our own citizens and those all over the world ... those who have sadly perished as a consequence, May God Rest Their Souls ... and for those who have survived and are struggling to find their place under the sun. And we owe it also to all our citizens who happen to live in the vicinity of a minefield or close to a contaminated area ... citizens of all ages who could 'potentially' become victims in the future. May they be safeguarded and protected always.

So countries that are fulfilling Art. 5 obligations and for those that have been granted extensions ... don't delay ... just try your level best to get it done expeditiously and cross it off the to do list as soon as possible. I know that it is complicated ... believe me I do ... I have been there! I know that it is not easy to coordinate and funding is always a problem ... but if you show real seriousness like I mentioned earlier many entities will notice and will most likely lend a hand. The same goes for all the other implementation obligations, whether VA, or MRE, or stockpile destruction, or reducing retained mines, etc. If you 'own' the problem and are SERIOUS about getting it done, then and only then I believe ... will it actually happen.

Let us make sure that the history books in the future write a good word about the Convention. Imagine how remarkable it would be if historians and commentators remember the Convention in a positive light by saying that it started off with a dash ... with immense optimism and panache ... and continued to gather attention with less and less apprehension ... affected countries

stepped up and lit the spark and with grace and elegance met the mark. Clearing their lands and assisting their loved ones was always the aim, for anything less would have been an unacceptable shame.

Let's keep aiming high.

I thank you all very much.