

BELGIUM

Universalization

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention – Fifth Review Conference – November 2024

Mr. President,

Please allow me to first extend our heartfelt thanks to you and to the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia for the warmest of welcomes we have received in Siem Reap. We congratulate you for all your hard work in preparing for this Review Conference. Special Envoy Princess Astrid could unfortunately not join us this week but she sends her best wishes for a fruitful and productive meeting.

Belgium aligns itself with the EU statement and wishes to make the following comments in its national capacity.

Mr. President,

Let us all be guided by the principles and objectives underpinning our Convention. A mine free world is our goal. This will only be achieved if we truly universalize the Convention. Unfortunately, accession to the Convention has slowed down, while new security crises put our norm to the test. In a time where the rules-based international order is under threat, every accession of a new State Party signifies the strengthening of the international norm against these crude weapons.

Mr. President,

Belgium wishes to commend Cambodia's and your personal engagement to seek new members to our community. We fully share your sense of priority in this matter. It was an honor for Belgium to assist you as informal co-facilitator for the Universalization. My delegation is convinced that the Universalization Core Group can help us to intensify our activities related to the universalization of the Convention. We also wish to convey our deep appreciation for the tireless efforts of HRH Prince Mired of Jordan.

We would also like to acknowledge the steps States not yet party to the Convention have already taken to adhere to the spirit and to a number of principles and norms shared within the Convention. We in particular applaud States that have taken steps towards accession or that are represented here today.

Earlier this year, Special Envoy Princess Astrid, had the opportunity to meet with authorities of Vietnam, Lao PDR and the Marshall Islands. In October she had a follow-up exchange in Geneva with representatives of the Marshall Islands and Micronesia together with the ISU. We thank the concerned Governments for the fruitful exchanges and we look forward to further engagement.

Furthermore, Belgium integrated the importance of universalization of the APMBC in several bilateral meetings with States not yet Party, in different multilateral fora and in other meetings relating to mine action where States not yet Party were represented.

Finally, Mr. President,

Our universalization efforts need to be backed up by an unwavering commitment of our present membership to the obligations under the Convention. Central to these is the undertaking never to use anti-personnel mines under any circumstances. We will revert to the issue under the compliance agenda item.

Thank you.