

**AGENDA ITEM – PRESIDENT’S MANDATE:  
UNIVERSALIZATION**



**Statement on Universalization  
Intersessional Meeting of the Mine Ban Treaty  
9 June 2017**

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines welcomes the steps taken by some states not party towards accession to the Mine Ban Treaty. Since the adoption of the Maputo Action Plan in 2014, nearly half of the 35 states not party have taken action either to accede to the treaty, or to clear landmines, assist victims, destroy stockpiled landmines, stop production, or provide funds to affected countries – thus solidifying the norms of the treaty.

The last country to accede to the Mine Ban Treaty was Oman in August 2014. We believe all States Parties can and should play a role in universalization. In the Maputo Action Plan, States Parties have promised to *proactively reach out to states not party* to encourage them to join the treaty. As we are half way through the implementation of the Maputo Action Plan, it is time for all States Parties to step up efforts before the Fourth Review Conference in 2019.

Mr. President, fourteen months have passed since Sri Lanka announced in March 2016 that its cabinet of ministers had approved accession to the Mine Ban Treaty, but since then no further progress has been reported. We urge the government of Sri Lanka to complete accession as soon as possible and to participate in the 16MSP in Vienna as a State Party.

We take note of the steps taken by States not party such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, China, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Morocco, Nepal, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, United States, and Vietnam to clear landmines, assist victims, destroy stockpiled landmines, submit voluntary transparency reports, or provide assistance to affected countries. They should also move forward to accede to the treaty.

Twenty years have passed since the Marshall Islands signed the treaty and it still remains the only country left to ratify. The best way for Marshall Islands to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the treaty would be to ratify it! The defense relationship with the United States should no longer be an obstacle since the change in US policy setting the objective of acceding to the treaty.

States not party that cannot join the treaty immediately should take interim steps toward a total ban, including adopting a moratorium on the use, production, and transfer of antipersonnel mines; submitting a voluntary transparency report, engaging in implementation, and voting in support of the annual UN General Assembly resolution on the Mine Ban Treaty.

Universalization of the norm also goes beyond states. Non-state armed groups still use antipersonnel landmines in about 10 countries. They use mostly victim-activated improvised landmines and booby-traps rather than factory-made landmines. There is also a significant number of armed groups that have agreed to ban these weapons and to carry out, or to facilitate, mine action activities. Members of the ICBL such as Geneva Call engage with these groups. Sixty five non-state armed groups have pledged to halt mine use through the Deed of Commitment or other declaration since 1997. For example, in Syria, the People's Protection Unit (YPG), with limited training and equipment, has reportedly cleared tens of thousands of explosive devices since 2013.

It is crucial that specialized agencies have access to areas under the control of armed groups to engage them on the ban on antipersonnel mines, and to support their mine action efforts. The ICBL calls upon parties to armed conflict to conclude humanitarian agreements on joint demining initiatives, such as the pilot demining agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP.

Ladies and gentlemen, we echo the call of the Presidency: let's commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mine Ban Treaty this year with action. The ICBL will continue to promote the treaty and the stigma against antipersonnel mines.

Thank you.