



International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Statement on universalization

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Intersessional Meeting

Geneva, 22-24 May 2019

Thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to speak as we usually do on universalization of the Convention. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is disappointed that the number of States Parties to this Convention has not risen in the last 18 months – we remain at 164 States parties. After the sense of accomplishment and celebration that surrounded the 20th anniversary of the Convention's entry into force we had hoped for more momentum. Of course, we are getting to the pointy end of the spectrum – 33 States to become party to the Convention – here we really need to see a ramping up of this momentum and drive for universalization.

While we have not had any more ratifications or accessions, we have seen a reduction in the use of landmines. Vast areas of land have been released after clearance. Numerous landmines have been destroyed and thousands of victims have received treatment and assistance every year. The effects still linger though. Landmines, cluster munitions as well as more broadly explosive remnants of war have catastrophic effects on conflict-torn societies. The price in civilian casualties is not only felt during active hostilities but it lingers for many years, even decades, after the end of hostilities.

Anti-personnel mines continue to impact on the lives of people in many contexts today and we urge all States to accede to the Convention without further delay.

The ICRC has itself increased its efforts since the last Meeting of the States Parties to encourage universalization with several events either dedicated to weapons or with a focus on weapons. In three weeks' time we will have a panel at the Commonwealth Red Cross Red Crescent Conference on IHL and weapons with specific presentations on landmines among others, to encourage those few Commonwealth states which are not yet party to the Convention to accede to and implement the Convention. Last month a Regional Seminar on Landmines, Cluster Munitions and Explosive Remnants of War, co-hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lao DPR and the ICRC with the support of the Kingdom of Norway took place in Vientiane, Laos. Some 90 participants and speakers, including officials from seven South-east Asian countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam), diplomatic representatives from Norway, Ireland, Japan, Republic of Korea and the United

Kingdom, Implementation Support Units of this Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, UNDP, the ASEAN secretariat and the ASEAN Mine Action Center, GICHD, international and local NGOs and demining operators, as well as the ICRC were present and made contributions on topics ranging from the legal framework governing "weapons that keep on killing" to mine clearance, risk education and victim assistance. We thank everyone involved for making this an event which well and truly achieved its objectives of promoting adherence to treaties including the APMBBC and raising awareness about the humanitarian consequences of the use of these weapons.

In the next months leading up to the Review Conference, we hope to raise more awareness of this Convention and encourage all States that wish to see an end to the particularly heinous form of suffering that land mines cause to accede and indeed to implement the terms of the Convention.