

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

On behalf of the ICBL let me start by extending our congratulations to **Finland** for acceding to the Mine Ban Treaty earlier this year. We look forward to your swift and thorough implementation of the treaty's obligations and to taking on a leadership role within the mine ban community. Last month we were informed that the Government of **Somalia** made the decision to join the treaty, and that it is in the process of depositing the instrument of accession to the UN office in New York. We warmly welcome Somalia's decision to join the treaty, which will bring all of sub-Saharan Africa on board the mine ban.

Unfortunately, the past year has also brought us bad news. In the course of past few months **antipersonnel landmines have been used** by Syria on its borders with Lebanon and Turkey and last year also by Israel, Libya and Myanmar. These newly laid mines add to an already existing threat to civilians, and we have already received reports of several casualties. This proves the necessity of universal adherence to the Mine Ban Treaty to ensure landmines will stop claiming lives and limbs.

ICBL has **publicly condemned** all new use of antipersonnel landmines, called for an immediate stop to use and has called for rapid clearance. We applaud those States Parties who have condemned use, and in particular the very recent use in Syria. We encourage all States Parties to denounce any use and do everything they can to ensure that antipersonnel landmines are not used by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances.

Now I would like to mention a few countries where ICBL and its member organizations have focused their recent efforts.

Poland, the only EU member state outside the treaty and one of the two last remaining signatories, together with the Marshall Islands, that have not yet ratified, has promised that it will ratify the treaty this year. We have continued to engage with Polish authorities to ensure they keep their promise. Earlier this year we worked with the President of the European Parliament, who, in his press release on April 4, called on Poland to ratify the treaty in 2012. We strongly encourage Poland to take immediate action on its ratification and become a State Party by the 12th Meeting of States Parties in December this year.

We were pleased to see **Myanmar** attend the 11MSP last December and a number of informal events related to the Mine Ban Treaty earlier this year. We also welcomed a statement issued by the new Myanmar Human Rights Commission earlier this year, requesting both the state military and the Kachin Independence Army to stop using mines in the conflict in the north of the country. In February 2012, ICBL members conducted a mission to Myanmar, during which they discussed the mine problem there and the prospect of joining the treaty with several political parties, human rights institutions and other relevant actors. We are heartened by the recent developments and look forward to engaging more with Myanmar's authorities on taking steps towards joining the ban as well as clearing its land.

We have continued a close dialog with **Lao PDR and Lebanon**, though we still fail to understand why two countries that have been great champions on cluster munitions continue to remain outside of the Mine Ban Treaty. Banning landmines and joining this treaty does not mean Laos has to change its priorities from addressing the greatest humanitarian problem as it is up to national authorities to determine its priorities. But joining the treaty could help accomplish clearance of all contamination faster by opening the door to new international assistance.

We have been informed that the US landmine policy review has been put on President Obama's desk for a decision. So now more than ever, the Obama administration needs to hear from you. The ICBL and its members have also been continuing to bring the issue to the President's attention. Last month, the US Campaign to Ban Landmines sent a letter on behalf of 76 NGOs to President Obama and other decision-makers in Washington urging the US to join the treaty. As well, the ICBL and its members continue to work in NATO countries and other allied States Parties to seek their leadership in getting the US on board.

In February 2012, an ICBL Diplomatic Advisor visited **Oman** to encourage accession to the treaty. He held discussions with key authorities of the Sultan's Army Forces, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant institutions and decision makers. We believe Oman has no reason to remain outside of the treaty and we call on Oman to join the treaty without further delay and promote it further in the Gulf region.

In addition, ICBL members in several other states not party continue to knock on the door of their authorities to encourage accession. Most recently campaigners in over **70 countries** raised awareness and engaged their governments as part of the global Lend Your Leg action. Campaigners organized press conferences, photo exhibitions, social media campaigns, sports competitions and other events in states like Georgia, Nepal, the US, and 12 other states not parties and territories¹.

In terms of spreading the norm to **non-state armed groups**, the ICBL congratulates the Justice and Equality Movement of Sudan for its recent signing of Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment banning antipersonnel mines. As the conflict in the region is unfortunately again on the rise, this commitment is very important. We also applaud the good cooperation between the government of Niger and the ex-Movement des Nigériens pour la Justice in mine action. The ICBL continues to encourage all governments to provide political and financial support to mine action in all affected communities, including those where armed non-state actors may be present or active.

The treaty has gone a long way to establishing a universal **norm**, but our work is far from over. The truth is that many states not party are stocking millions of mines, and tragically, some armed forces continue to use them. Working towards universalization of the treaty is a commitment States Parties made as part of the Cartagena Action Plan. At the halfway point to the Third Review Conference, the ICBL encourages you all to ensure we are a bigger community at that time and that the mine ban norm holds even firmer by then.

Thank you.

¹ India, Israel, Korea (Republic of), Lao PDR, Lebanon, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Syria, Taiwan, Vietnam and Western Sahara.