

## ICRC statement on Universalisation

### Standing Committee on General Status and Operation of the Convention Monday, 21 May 2012

The International Committee of the Red Cross warmly welcomes **Finland** as the newest State Party to the Mine Ban Convention. We congratulate Finland for this demonstration of solidarity with the global effort to end the scourge of anti-personnel mines. The ICRC commends Finland's commitment to maintain this momentum by rapidly implementing its obligations. We would also encourage it to consider taking a leadership role in future in specific fields such as universalisation or implementation.

The ICRC is also delighted to hear from **Somalia** that its accession is imminent.<sup>1</sup> We very much look forward to having all States in Sub-Saharan Africa as members of the Convention and to welcoming Somalia as a new State Party at the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties in December. We would have liked to hear a similar announcement from Poland, given its past commitment to ratify the Convention this year. We hope to be soon able to welcome Poland as a State Party, and look forward to having all European Union states on board.

The ICRC was also pleased to hear this morning from **Lao PDR** that it is still working towards joining the Convention in the future. We urge Lao PDR to take that step as soon as possible, with the support of the international community.

In regards to the intervention by **Morocco**, we welcome its support for the humanitarian goals of the Convention but regret that it continues to see a need to maintain anti-personnel mines for security reasons. We hope that Morocco will soon join the 159 States Parties that have recognized that the humanitarian benefits of the ban on anti-personnel mines outweigh the purported security needs.

In addition, we encourage other States that have shown recent interest in the Mine Ban Convention, including **Tonga, the United States of America** and **Mongolia**, to intensify their efforts towards accession, with a view to announcing progress by the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties.

The ICRC would like to thank President Prak Sokhonn and HRH Prince Mired for their relentless efforts on universalisation. We support Prince Mired's appeal for other states to ensure that universalisation is on the agenda for high level meetings with states not yet party. We would also like to thank ICBL, Belgium as head of the Universalisation Contact Group, Australia, Canada and all other states that are engaging bilaterally with states not yet party on their possible future participation in this important Convention. We hope that other States will join their efforts, as universalisation is the concern of all of us, and should not fall to just a few actors.

Despite these very positive steps, unfortunately, there continue to be reports of new use of anti-personnel mines in a number of contexts around the world. Such use, by any actor, has harmful consequences both during and after armed conflicts, and must stop.

The adherence of all States to the Mine Ban Convention remains a priority for the ICRC. Together, we must continue to work towards the day when no state or non-state actor considers the use of anti-personnel mines acceptable, and that all support a universal ban on their use.

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<sup>1</sup> It was subsequently announced that Somalia deposited its instrument of accession on 16 April 2012, becoming the 160<sup>th</sup> State Party to the Convention.