

Universalization

Statement by His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Al-Hussein Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Special Envoy

Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention

21 May 2012

Co-Chairs & Ladies & Gentlemen,

It has been my pleasure over the past few years to serve you, at the request of the Presidents, as Special Envoy. With the support of the ISU, this has involved me doing exactly what was agreed at the Cartagena Summit vis-à-vis universalization. That is, in Cartagena we agreed that “it has become clear that there has been a dire need for States Parties, at the ministerial level or higher, to engage States not parties.”

I have sought to do my part, traveling to all corners of the world to engage Princes, Prime Ministers, Governor Generals, Foreign Ministers, Parliamentarians, heads of armed forces and others on the Convention. I am committed to continue to do what I can, but I am only one actor amongst many that should be involved in high level engagement and universalization more generally. In my travels I continue to be surprised when the leaders I meet with provide no indication that other States Parties have also raised the issue of universalization at a high level. The question I think we need to ask ourselves is ‘why is that so?’

My hope would be that whenever a prime minister or foreign minister or minister of defense of a State Party meets with his or her counterpart from a State not party, messages would be communicated about the importance of all States joining our common effort and on the desirability of each State not party reflecting anew on the matter of anti-personnel mines. To think that the issue of landmines can always be on the agenda at high-level meetings is not realistic...but if it were on the agenda in at least 5-10% of such meetings we would in fact see more movement on the universalization front. If the issue of universalization is not addressed from time to time at the very highest of levels...as I am suggesting...then many States not party unfortunately will dismiss the Convention as being not really that important. Donor countries especially...should in my humble view, take regular diplomatic initiatives on universalization that are on par with or commensurate with their financial commitments...that have been immense.

I would also recall that in Cartagena we recorded that high level efforts should “complement more States Parties intensifying engagement of States not parties at the officials’ level and further non-governmental advocacy.” I commend the ICBL and ICRC for their ongoing efforts and for the commitment shown by the United Nations and the Secretary General to the promotion of the Convention.

In terms of my recent activities, I wish to share with you that in February 2012 I traveled to Libya as part of a big delegation headed by Jordan’s Prime Minister. During this visit, I met with Libya’s Interim Prime Minister and was able to bring up

with him the issue of the APMBC. He was extremely forthcoming and interested in the subject matter. My own gut feeling and guess is that Libya will accede to the convention sometime in the near future. It is very aware of the dangers of its landmine and ERW problem and is eager to deal with the problem in order to safeguard its citizens and to promote the development of the country.

In addition, having met the First Lady of Sri Lanka at a disability conference in Doha, Qatar several months ago, I followed up by writing to express my desire to engage Sri Lanka's leadership on the matter of the Convention. She recently responded saying that it would be opportune for us to agree on a suitable time for a visit once an internal process involving all stakeholders within Sri Lanka was established.

Finally, I am encouraged about progress in discussions between the ISU and the European Union that I hope will see the ISU in the coming months begin to implement a European Union Council Decision in support of the Cartagena Action Plan. This draft Council Decision includes important elements that concern universalization, including support for ongoing high-level engagement.

Thank you all.