

Notes for ICRC Statement on Universalization

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention, Geneva, 27 May 2013

The International Committee of the Red Cross is delighted to see further progress towards universalization of this Convention and the goal of a world free of anti-personnel mines.

On behalf of the ICRC, I would like to extend a warm welcome to **Poland** as the newest State party to the Convention. (The Convention will enter into force for it this coming Saturday, 1 June.) Poland's ratification is especially significant, as one of the original signatories to the Convention in December 1997 and the last member of the European Union to become a party to this important instrument.

We would also like to welcome States not yet party to the Convention that are present today. We hope that more States will take the decision to join this Convention over the coming year, leading to the Third Review Conference in 2014.

Progress has definitely been made but 36 States are still not party to the Convention, including some that reportedly hold significant stockpiles of antipersonnel mines or on whose territory people fall victim to anti-personnel mines each year. A number of these States have not yet relinquished the possibility of using these weapons as a means of warfare. More efforts are therefore still needed to ensure the fulfilment of the Convention's humanitarian goals across the globe.

For the ICRC, universalization of the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention remains a priority. ICRC delegations are engaged in a regular dialogue with States not party to encourage accession. Since the 12th Meeting of States Parties, for example, the ICRC has discussed this issue at a high level with the **United States** and a number of other States not party. The ICRC has also engaged with non-State actors in a number of contexts to promote adherence to the Convention's humanitarian norms.

It is important that all States Parties take on the responsibility to promote the full universalisation of the Convention in line with the Cartagena Action Plan. In this regard, we would like to acknowledge the commitment of **Belgium** as the coordinator of the Universalization Contact Group, the efforts of the **European Union** and other States involved in universalisation efforts, including **Australia, Japan and New Zealand**, and the important work of the ICBL.

We would like to encourage more States to get involved in universalisation efforts, recalling that the Mine Ban Convention is the only comprehensive legal framework to address the scourge of anti-personnel mines. It is only through its full universalization and implementation that we can halt the unacceptable harm and long lasting socio-economic problems that these weapons cause.