

Notes for ICRC intervention

Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention Monday 23 April 2007

Universalization

Thank you Mr. Co-Chair,

On behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross (the ICRC), let me begin by joining the previous speakers in warmly welcoming the two States that have adhered to the Convention since the 6th Meeting of the States Parties last September. We are delighted that the Republic of Montenegro and Indonesia formally committed themselves to the treaty's comprehensive ban on anti-personnel mines, and we call on the two remaining signatory States (Poland and the Marshall Islands) – and indeed on all other States that are considering joining this exceptional humanitarian treaty -- to do so as soon as possible.

Mr. Co-Chair, the adherence of all States to the Ottawa Convention remains an important goal for the ICRC. Beyond this specific goal, an understanding is emerging among States Parties that "universalization" of the treaty means more than adherence of all States, it also implies the universal observance of the anti-personnel mine ban norm by Non-State Armed Groups. This broader understanding of universalization is stated notably in Action #7 of the Nairobi Action Plan.

We welcome the interventions this morning from a number of States not parties to the Ottawa framework. In particular, we are delighted to have heard that Palau and Mongolia mentioning that they will join the Convention in the near future.

Two regions of the world remain unfortunately 'under-represented' in the list of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention. The first is Asia. We welcome the peace agreement in Nepal and, as Canada already mentioned, we would like to highlight the fact that the peace agreement between the government of Nepal and the communist party of Nepal specifically mentions the removal within 60 days of landmines and booby-traps as an obligation imposed on both sides at the end of the armed conflict. We would hope that this clear position taken by both parties could enable Nepal to join the Ottawa convention in the very near future.

Another under-represented region of the world within the Ottawa family is certainly the Middle East. Allow me Mr. co-chair, to mention that together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, the ICRC is organising a meeting for States of the Gulf Cooperation Council entitled 'Addressing the human costs of AP landmines and Explosive Remnants of War'. It is to take place on 11 and 12 June of this year in Kuwait city.

We are also hoping to organise a similar conference in Tunis early in September 2007 for the States of the Maghreb. We would like to express our appreciation to the

Jordanian delegation which will chair the 8th Assembly of States Parties at the Dead Sea for their cooperation and support for these two sub-regional meetings which we hope will increase awareness of the human costs of anti-personnel landmines in the region as well as commitment to the Convention.

Thank you Mr. Co-Chair.