



Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Since 2001, during the 3rd States Parties Meeting in Managua, the need to engage armed non-State actors to respect the norms of the Convention and/or to adhere to the Deed of Commitment of Geneva Call was underlined in many meetings, conferences and documents.

A lot of work was done towards this objective, and today 34 armed non-State actors have signed the Deed of Commitment, others have signed unilateral declarations or publicly taken the decision to respect the norms of the Convention.

This is already an important success, achieved not only by our organization, but also thanks to the work of local NGOs in the field and national campaigns of the ICBL. It could be also achieved because we received strong political and financial support from intergovernmental organizations and many governments, even by many states concerned with the relevant conflicts, like for instance Colombia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Burundi, Sudan, Somalia. Let me take this opportunity to thank them here.

This is important but this is not enough, collecting signatures is not a goal in itself. Like for States, the final objective is a humanitarian one, something changing the daily life of the population living in areas under the control or influence of armed non-State actors and threatened by the presence of mines.

We now face an important challenge: the implementation of the obligations contained in the Deed of Commitment. As is the case for States, non-States actors often don't have the capacity to clear mine fields or to destroy their stockpiles by themselves. Only one of our signatory groups, the Polisario Front, was able to do so almost by itself. But for the others, they need assistance, which doesn't mean military support, which doesn't mean political support. It will allow them to move from a signature to concrete and humanitarian impact in the field.

Since 2003, we have requested support for stockpile destruction. Every new day is a day with the risk of having these mines stolen - like in Somalia, where there are credible allegations that explosives stolen there, re-appear in the terrible suicide bombings in Iraq. There is also a risk of having these mines abandoned by the armed group if they have to flee as has been the case in Burma. Relating to Burma, I should mention that two of the groups that signed Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment last week have immediately appealed for assistance to help them destroy their stockpiles.

But it is not only humanitarian concerns that are at play. It can also have an impact on States Parties capacity to meet their obligations under the Treaty. Geneva Call carried out research last

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year which concluded that some states will have to request an extension, now an important discussion point amongst States Parties, due to the presence of stockpiles belonging to armed groups in their territory, continuing mine use by non-state actors or the lack of information as to where the armed non-State actors have laid their mines.

Our message today is to say that the aim of action 46 of the Nairobi Action Plan has yet to be realized. Armed non-State actors can play a role not only on the universalization of the Treaty, but also in its full implementation. And for that the support not only of donor governments, but also from governments affected by conflict is needed. This is clearly in the interest of the Mine Ban Treaty and also of the affected populations who have suffered from the scourge of mines for far too long.

Geneva, 24 April 2007