

Thailand's statement on universalisation to the meeting of the Standing  
Committee on the General Status and the Operation of the Convention  
Geneva, 8 December 2000

In Asia, in the year 2000, we see two new countries coming on board. Philippines ratified the Ottawa Convention on 17 February and Bangladesh ratified on 6 September.

Admittedly, within Southeast Asia, the issue of landmines is quite sensitive to some countries in the region due to national security reason. Therefore, it has not been raised very often in the regional forums, such as ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). In addition, recently, the focus is more on the issue of small arms since the UN will host an international conference on small arms in New York next year.

However, the issue of landmines has been discussed from time to time in ARF. In June this year, Canada, one of the ARF's members, has circulated, through Thailand, as a Chairman of ASEAN Standing Committee (ASC) at that time, a document on "Approaches of ARF Member Countries to APLs, which is a compilation of each ARF member's status on the Ottawa Convention, CCW Amended Protocol II, adopted legislation or measures on APLs, and activities in support of demining efforts and victim assistance. This document is being updated by ARF members. I believe that the issue will be taken up again in the next ARF meeting.

On the non-governmental side, ICBL, together with UNICEF, is planning to have ICBL advocacy meeting early next year, possibly in Bangkok, in order to allow some States Parties in the region share their experiences and discuss how they signed the Treaty, steps they took and so on to the participants from some Non-Signatories in the region, with the hope that they will take this information into consideration in joining the Ottawa Convention. On our part, the Royal Thai Government stands ready to assist ICBL and UNICEF as much as we can for the success of this meeting.

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