

**Update on the Universalization Contact Group
February 1, 2002
Delivered by Canada**

Thank you Mr. Co-Chairs,

I have the privilege of reporting on the recent work of the Universalization Contact Group of the Ottawa Convention.

The Universalization Contact Group is grounded in the President's action program of the Third Meeting of States Parties. Canada was encouraged to continue open-ended discussions of Universalization efforts.

As a reminder to all who are interested, I will reiterate that the Universalization Contact Group is a completely open-ended forum, and welcomes all who wish to play an active role in efforts towards universalization of the Ottawa Convention.

As has been the tradition, the Contact group met on the margins of the Standing Committee meetings, on Thursday January 31. Representatives from more than thirty States and NGOs, from every region of the world, participated in a rich and lively discussion.

The discussion was oriented towards documenting some concrete, actionable items which could help us to systematically make progress towards, and hopefully beyond, the minimum number of one hundred and thirty States Parties by the time of the Fourth Meeting of States Parties.

As a first step, many States and organizations committed themselves to a series of specific tasks, which were recorded and will be reported back on to the group.

In addition to the many tasks assigned, the group took note of some recent developments with potential for follow up.

Follow-up with and reminders for those who volunteered for these tasks were named as key to ensure that real progress is made between now and the meetings of the Standing Committees in May. In addition, desire was expressed for a number of communications mechanisms to facilitate the work of the group. The Universalization Contact Group coordinator will follow up on the implementation of these mechanisms in the coming weeks, including requests to examine how the Implementation Support Unit might be in a position to enhance the work of the Contact Group.

In conclusion, thanks to the active interest and specific commitments made by participants of the Universalization Contact Group, we are certain that the universalization goals set for the Fourth Meeting of States Parties can be met. We look forward to returning in May to report progress that is measurable and significant.