

Canadian Statement
Standing Committee on General Status and Operation
June 6, 2008

Update from the Universalization Contact Coordinator

Thank-you Mr. Co-Chair

Canada was pleased to hold the Universalization Contact Group meeting on Wednesday of this week. The Universalization Contact Group's aim is to bring together interested States Parties, International Organizations and Civil Society to find and share ways of ensuring adherence to the Ottawa Convention and to bring in new States Parties. This group is open to all interested parties and we were pleased to have a large meeting, full of fruitful discussion.

Our meeting provided an opportunity to update other members on universalization activities that took place between the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties and these Intersessional Standing Committees – many of those Canada reported on during our statement on Monday so I will not reiterate them now. I will however, make note of some of the key lessons learned shared by members: Firstly, we noted the importance of continuous engagement with States not party. It is essential that while regional workshops such as the ones held recently in Indonesia and Malaysia are an important forum for discussion and engagement we must follow-up such workshops by making use of every opportunity in our regular bilateral and multilateral meetings. Secondly, the recording, retaining and sharing information of universalization activities is an effective way to strengthen and make the best use of follow-up activities by other States or organizations. Thirdly, we noted the importance of making use of available assets including local Ambassadors, military-to-military dialogues, political visits and many others. Finally, as highlighted by Prince Mired, and echoed by many, our work must be complimented by engagement at the highest political levels – for this is where the influence is needed –with the key decision makers of the various countries.

This week's UCG meeting was also a platform for discussion as we lead up to the Second Review Conference. The next 16-18 months are critical if we are to bring in more States Parties to Convention by the Fall of 2009. With assistance from Prince Mired, President of the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties, Ambassador Streuli, President-Designate of the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties, the ISU, the UN and civil society, over the next few months, the UCG will begin work on an action plan for the lead up to the Review Conference. We shall make use of the regional workshop hosted by Palau, and the six regional workshops supported by the EU and the EC and other universalization missions. We encourage each State Party to take up their responsibility as so stated in the preamble of the Convention "*Emphasizing the desirability of attracting the adherence of all States*

to this Convention, and determined to work strenuously towards the promotion of its universalization in all relevant fora.”

We will be focusing principally on those countries which have shown recently progress towards ratification and accession, particularly in regions where adherence to the Convention remains low.

We have a tremendous opportunity to raise the profile of mine action and the Convention leading up the Review Conference, a significant milestone in the life of the Convention and we will need the help of all relevant actors. We ask that you think of ways your state or organization could raise the issue with States not Party and to provide your ideas to Universalization Contact Group via Canada over next few months. With continued effort we can reach our collective goal of a mine-free world.

Thank you, Mr. Co-Chair