

**Statement of Canada
Coordinator of the Universalization Contact Group
Ottawa Convention Intersessional Standing Committee Meetings
June 2, 2008**

Thank you Mr. ~~President~~ *Co-chair*

As Coordinator of the Universalization Contact Group, Canada, in its regular updates, has had the tremendous privilege of welcoming those countries that ratified or acceded to the Convention since the previous meeting of States Parties. This is first time that I can recall that we have not had any new states join the Convention in the previous period. Does this mean that our efforts are dwindling? Does this mean that we have reached our peak for States Parties? The answer is clearly no, for the work of universalization is not finished, as we still have 39 countries outside of the Convention; and because the hard work of States Parties, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Implementation Support Unit continues with intensity. The effort of these organizations and State Parties, to tirelessly work to raise the Convention with States not party is the reason why the Ottawa Convention is the most successful disarmament treaty to date. But we are reminded by our ICBL colleagues, that the Convention is a “success in progress,” we have 156 States Parties...and counting... and thus we need to commit to finishing the job.

Canada was pleased to report in November in Jordan that between the 7th and 8th Meeting of the States Parties, five countries – Iraq, Indonesia, Kuwait, Montenegro and Palau – joined the Convention. These countries signaled to their neighbours, and to the world, that the military utility of antipersonnel mines is far outweighed by the humanitarian consequences. As we welcomed these states into the Ottawa Convention community just a short time ago, we note with the delight their enthusiasm to already begin sharing their experiences with states not party and to actively promote universalization efforts in their regions, particularly Indonesia and Palau. The UCG is happy to work alongside you.

We continue to recognize that states not party, may not be currently in a position to accede immediately, and we welcome and encourage steps towards the Convention and signals of support for its principles. For example, we recognize Poland’s annual submission of a voluntary Article 7 report, Morocco’s second’s voluntary submission and we are also pleased that for the first time, Mongolia also submitted a voluntary Article 7 report and we encourage these countries to continue to their paths to ratification and succession. We encourage other states not party to also make positive steps towards joining the Convention and to keep the mine action community aware of such progress.

Thus, although we are not announcing new ratifications or accessions in this update, I am pleased nonetheless to report on a number of important activities that have taken place since we all meet in Jordan in November of last year.

To begin, Jordan, led by His Royal Highness Prince Mired, began universalization efforts even prior to the 8MSP in Jordan and have continued throughout the year. As we know, the Nairobi Action Plan challenges us to place “Particular importance to promoting adherence in regions where the level of acceptance to the Convention is low” and Prince Mired has focused on not only his own region of the Middle East and North Africa but SouthEast Asia as demonstrated by his recent mission to Singapore and South Korea.

Further in this region, a number of important activities took place in 2008. First, new State Party Indonesia, with support from Australia and Canada held a regional workshop in Bali in February. The workshop was well attended by regional states and was followed closely by an ASEAN Regional Forum workshop held in Malaysia with support from Germany. We are encouraged at the support for the Convention at these workshops. To keep the momentum, Canada undertook a high level mission to Lao PRR, Nepal and Vietnam. We also note Japan who consistently writes to its neighbours, encouraging attendance at Ottawa Convention meetings. The UCG looks forward to seeing the fruits of these recent labours.

Canada was delighted to hear the European Parliament passed a resolution marking the 10th Anniversary of the Convention and which in part, “Encourages the two EU Member States which have not yet acceded to the Convention or completed the ratification process to do so before the next Ottawa Convention Review Conference in 2009.” The UCG further urges EU States Parties to actively promote this challenge put forth in the resolution in their regular multilateral and bilateral relations with Poland and Finland, the two EU States not party. Canada, in recent meetings, has raised the issue of ratification with Poland at the highest possible levels. We look forward to when all EU members will be party to this Convention.

As we are approximately 18 months away from the 2009 Second Review Conference, a significant milestone in the life of the Convention, we need to focus our efforts to bring in more states to the Convention. The UCG is supportive and excited about the regional workshops funded by EU beginning in 2009 to prepare for the Second RevCon. One of the main objectives of these workshops will be universalization.

We are reminded that a number of the states that remain outside of the Convention are significant cases. Among them are some of the world’s largest stockpilers of mines, 13 of them maintain the right to produce mines and two countries, Russia and Burma, have been reported as still using mines. The only way we can reach our collective goal of a time when no one will ever walk in fear of this indiscriminate weapon is to have all states on board and ensure the full implementation of the Convention. We need to continue to promote the humanitarian spirit of the Convention with all states as well as armed non-state actors who continue to victimize people with mines in eight countries. In this we are reminded of the Nairobi Acton Plan that “the only guarantee that the significant

disarmament and humanitarian advances to date will endure, and that a world free of anti-personnel mines will be ultimately realized will lie in the achievement of universal adherence to the Convention and the implementations of its comprehensive ban.”

We need to remain focused over the next 18 months in our universalization efforts. As we are truly grateful for the work of the ICBL, the ICRC, the ISU and a number of States Parties, we encourage ALL States Parties to actively take up the challenge and responsibility of bringing in more states by the next RevCon. The UCG will develop plans and priorities for the coming months on Wednesday at 13:00 in Salle D. We welcome all to the meeting and look forward to the discussions.