

Universalization Panel (Human Security Network)

In my national capacity, I would like to inform you briefly about the initiatives for universalization of the Mine-Ban-Convention undertaken by the Human Security Network.

As already explained during our last meeting in February, this Network is an international group of states and comprises Austria, Canada, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, The Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland, Thailand and South Africa as an observer. It is the aim of the Network to take concrete actions to make the world a place where all people can live in security and dignity, free from fear and want, and with equal opportunities to fully develop their human potential.

During the last year, when Austria was chairing the Network, a number of universalization-initiatives have been taken, including the adoption of a declaration promoting the universalization of the Convention by the ministers for foreign affairs of the Human Security Network members.

In addition, the Austrian Foreign Minister, in her capacity as chair of the Network, wrote letters in the name of the Network-States to all foreign ministers of those states that are not yet party to the Convention.

Last week, the Austrian term of chairing the Network came to a close at the 5th annual Ministerial Meeting of the Human Security Network in Graz. Mali will be chairing the group in the coming year. Among the many relevant topics, the continuation of efforts to promote the universalization was high on the agenda in Graz.

For the first time, the Network elaborated and adopted a medium-term workplan 2003-2005 which will include:

- developing a strategy for HSN members to act as regional champions of the Convention in their respective areas;

- efforts by HSN members to coordinate universalization activities on the basis of the HSN Declaration on Promoting the Universalization of the Convention of 13 September 2002 at the level of their diplomatic representations in states that are not party to the Ottawa Convention;
- developing a common strategy in preparation for the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention (Bangkok - September 2003), including support for the initial thinking going on in the informal/unofficial "Bangkok Regional Action Group" forum in Geneva;
- exploring ways the regional Human Security Centre in Amman might help raise the profile of the Convention in the Middle East, including the possible encouragement to host a regional workshop to advance the universalization of the Ottawa Convention within the region;
- exploring ways HSN countries can coordinate efforts with the G8 to support and promote the implementation of the relevant sections of New Partnership for Africa's Development and the G8 Africa Action Plan;
- Following-up to the letters sent by the HSN-Chair:
 - States that have replied to the HSN-letters (18) should be offered dialogue with HSN-States on their particular arguments for not joining the Ottawa Convention. In particular, they should be encouraged to participate at the Fifth Meeting of States Parties as observer and in the Intersessional Work Programme.
 - The states that have not replied should also receive follow up letters and be encouraged to participate at the Fifth Meeting of States Parties.
 - HSN-letters should be explicitly referred to by all HSN actors/groups undertaking universalization efforts.

I would like to conclude by reading the relevant paragraph Chairs Summary of the Graz Meeting of 10th of May 2003.

(quote) “The Network welcomed progress made in the implementation of the Ottawa-Convention to ban landmines. The HSN encouraged all states to sign, ratify and fully implement the Convention and agreed that the HSN continue its advocacy for its universalization. The HSN also stressed the importance of high level participation at the e5MSP to the Ottawa-Convention in Bangkok and urges non-states parties to the Convention to attend the meeting as observers” (end of quote).