

I wish to start by conveying my special thanks to the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia for hosting this meeting and providing such an excellent working environment.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Exactly one year ago at the 10MSP, the ICBL told us to “keep the energy up.”

What an important message that was.

I was elected President at the time when our movement was about to enter its third decade and as our Convention was about to reach middle adolescence.

The so-called glory days of the Ottawa Process were for some a distant memory.

For others, they were already things that we were reading about in history books.

However, the anti-personnel mine placed under the simple house constructed in a mine-field in Pailan Province that I saw yesterday doesn't care about history books.

The mine that exploded under the footstep of the villager who I met yesterday didn't care that an international movement that once made headlines is not always the first talking point raised by world leaders.

But we must care.

It is up to us to care.

It is up to us to keep this movement vibrant.

It is up to us to recall the solemn commitments we made when we joined this movement.

And it is up to us, to push for progress, as the ICBL is telling us to do at this Meeting of the States Parties.

It was an honour for me to serve for a year in a leadership position within this movement.

I considered it a privilege to push for progress, to call for further progress in universalization, in stockpile destruction, in mine clearance and in victim assistance.

At times over the past year, we risked drifting towards a pre-occupation with almost every matter that concerns this Convention other than the core aims of the Convention.

I believe, however, that we are on the right track, that our focus remains clear and our movement remains strong.

Here in Cambodia, the banner that catches the eye at the entrance of this building, reading “every mine cleared is a life saved,” reminds us that we must remain committed to this task until it is complete.

At the close of the 10MSP, I declared universalization, victim assistance and cooperation and assistance were priorities to me. I tried by best to keep my word to you.

I was pleased to have had the opportunity over the past year to work closely with universalization partners such as His Royal Highness Prince Mired of Jordan.

It was indeed important to me to play a role in advancing the victim assistance agenda through the international symposium I convened in Tirana earlier this year.

And it was a great opportunity to Chair the inaugural meeting of the Standing Committee on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance.

It was also important to me that I did my part to ensure the vitality of our movement.

I was heartened by the cooperation I had with many of you, representatives of States, NGOs and international organizations.

I wish to use this opportunity to express my appreciation and gratitude to all those that worked hard to assist me in advancing our agenda. It was indeed a great and rewarding team work.

I am so grateful to the President of the 2nd Review Conference, Ambassador Susan Eckey and the Norwegian team for paving the way to the 10MSP and providing enhanced support to me.

My special thanks go to the ISU and its Director, Mr. Kerry Brinkert, not just for supporting me, but for being such an asset to the implementation of our convention.

I also wish to thank my Albanian team, so small in number but so efficient in its performance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the foundation of this movement rests the idea that we can do more working together, than we could on our own.

As we meet here in Phnom Penh to mark two decades of this movement, knowing that many more years will be required to consolidate the impressive gains we have made, let us move forward in a spirit of cooperation that is unprecedented in multilateralism.

Thank you all for entrusting me with the responsibilities of presiding over and serve this landmark humanitarian instrument. I will always hold this experience close to my heart and I will do what I can to contribute to our ongoing work in the future.

Thank you.