

Notes for ICRC Intervention on Universalisation 2 December 2011

The ICRC is delighted that for the first time since 2007, we have the opportunity to welcome new States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. We wish to warmly congratulate Tuvalu and South Sudan for adhering to the Convention, and in the case of South Sudan, for the steps it has already taken towards its implementation.

We were also very pleased to hear Finland's announcement on Monday morning that it will accede in the coming weeks. We understand that this decision was not an easy one and we congratulate Finland for the stance it has taken towards ending the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel landmines.

The ICRC warmly welcomes the interventions today from other States not yet party to the Mine Ban Convention. We are thrilled to hear from Somalia that it intends to accede to the Convention in the coming months. We are also very encouraged to have heard from the Lao PDR that it still intends to join the Convention in the near future, and from the USA, that it is making real progress with its landmines policy review. We hope that in 2012 we will be able to celebrate at least two additional new States Parties - Poland and Tonga.

The filings of voluntary transparency reports under Article 7 of the Convention by the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Morocco and Poland are also a welcome step. We regret, however, that Morocco was not in a position to receive the President of the 10th MSP in Morocco last month.

The ICRC is alarmed by reports this year alleging the new use of anti-personnel mines by a number of States. In this respect, we remind States Parties of the commitment made in Cartagena to "condemn and continue to discourage in every possible way any production, transfer and use of anti-personnel mines by any actor".

Like others, we welcome the pledge made by the Libyan National Transitional Council, in April 2011, that it will not use antipersonnel or anti-vehicle landmines and we hope the new government will take steps to ensure the eradication of all anti-personnel mines in Libya and will be in a position to join the Convention in the near future.

The adherence of all States to the Mine Ban Convention remains a priority for the ICRC. During the past year, the ICRC has continued its efforts to promote the universalisation of the Convention. In September, the ICRC collaborated with the Government of Cambodia and UNDP in organising a regional seminar here in Phnom Penh, entitled "Addressing the Human Costs of Anti-personnel Landmines". Twelve Asian States participated, including six that are not party to the Convention. Among the topics discussed was the perceived military utility of anti-personnel landmines, which is an argument still being raised against adherence to the Convention, and remains one of the great challenges facing its full universalisation.

In July 2011, we worked with the meeting of Commonwealth Law Ministers and Senior Officials, to secure a resolution encouraging all Commonwealth States to actively consider adherence to outstanding weapons treaties, including the AP Mine Ban Convention. This is potentially very important for the universalisation of this Convention, considering that five Commonwealth States are not yet parties to it. In addition, the ICRC continued to promote the Convention through the Pacific Islands Law Officers Network and in bilateral discussions with several non-State Parties.

In closing, we urge all States Parties to fulfil their commitment under the *Cartagena Action Plan* to "seize every opportunity to promote" the Convention and its norms. In this regard, we would like to warmly acknowledge the relentless and determined efforts by HRH Prince Mired, the President of the 10MSP, the President of the 11MSP and the ICBL in promoting the Mine Ban Convention. We also look forward to working with Belgium as the new Chair of the Universalisation Contact Group in the coming year.