

**13MSP**  
**General Exchange of Views**  
**1 Dec 2013**  
**Statement by: Mired Raad Z. Al-Hussein**

Mr. President,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies & Gentlemen,

Greetings to you all!

I would like at the outset to congratulate you Mr. President for assuming the presidency of the 13MSP and would like to express to you my sincere best wishes for the year ahead.

Your Excellencies,  
Ladies & Gentlemen,

I have had the good fortune of being heavily involved on the landmine issue at the national level as well as the international level for many years now. I mentioned the words 'good fortune' because I truly believe in this vitally important cause...that of the eradication of landmines and trying to bring relief and support to those who have been injured and maimed by these horrific weapons. What is fundamentally important is that it is a cause that can achieve results and often-dramatic results. This fact in itself is extremely gratifying and rewarding. When you have demined 1000 mines for instance you have essentially saved the lives of 1000 innocent victims.

Additionally...this cause is fascinating because in most cases success can only be achieved through partnerships and interaction with a multitude of national as well as international players. Building strong bonds and relationships with the

stakeholders, the UN, the ICRC, NGOs, donors etc. is what adds to the appeal of this cause. Success in mine is almost always a team effort. And acquiring or building these relationships is possible!

With that being said...it is my very humble view...that we must all do our utmost to make sure that we maintain the stamina and health of the APMBC for the long term. It is not a time to be complacent or to gloat about our successes. The real challenge that we face is how to keep the good momentum and spirit of the convention alive and kicking for as long as possible. How can we make sure that resources will continue to flow to the countries that need the support? How can we encourage mine affected countries to give more serious attention to demining etc? We owe it to ourselves, our people and most of all the survivors who are depending on us to do the good work that we are supposed to do. Even though there will come a time in the future when matters will have to taper off...**now is not that time**. On the contrary...I think we need to think out of the box and come up with new innovative ways to revitalize the convention. Survivors especially...from every corner of the earth have in many cases been waiting and waiting and waiting for us to deliver on our promises and to afford them the care and support that they deserve.

So what is the solution? One simple answer in my view is 'ownership'...or rather 'national ownership.' It is an old concept that is often talked about but needs to be better understood and implemented. As you know...more than 30 States Parties are still in the process of fulfilling their mine clearance obligation with the vast majority requiring external assistance to complete the work. As well, 28 States Parties are responsible for the wellbeing of significant number of landmine survivors. With numbers such as these, we need to strengthen national ownership and seek efficient and creative ways to implement mine clearance and assist landmine survivors. Cooperation and assistance is of course one of the pillars of our Convention and in my humble opinion it can only flourish

successfully if mine affected countries clearly comprehend the concept of 'national ownership' and make serious efforts to apply it.

Of course...there is no one-size-fits-all model. However, it's been formally understood in the context of the APMBC that national ownership in the clearance of anti-personnel mines and other explosive hazards implies at least the following five components: (i) high level interest and leadership in fulfilling obligations and addressing challenges, (ii) an existing or new State entity empowered and provided with the human, financial and material capacity to carry out its responsibilities...in other words a 'national authority,' (iii) a clear understanding of the size, location and quality of the challenge or a commitment to promptly acquire such an understanding, (iv) a realistic and ambitious plan to address the challenge as soon as possible and lastly, a regular significant national financial commitment by the affected State itself. It must be noted however that, while the existence of these components will not guarantee that resources will flow in response to needs, demonstrating national ownership makes it significantly more likely that cooperation will flourish between those with needs and those in a position to provide assistance.

When I first started working on this issue in late 2004, our national authority...that had been established in 2000...was in a dismal state. We had practically zero funding from donor countries and the capacity of the organization was almost rock bottom due to the lack of leadership and mismanagement. So...what I tried to imbue upon my staff was the imperativeness of doing things correctly. Our challenge was to create a viable, credible and effective civilian 'National Authority' from scratch. And the only way this would be done was if we were persistent in overcoming our challenges...especially bureaucratic difficulties. We had to persevere in implementation and to garner community support and involvement. Creating and fostering information networks and donor partnerships was also essential. And at all times we had to be transparent with all our stakeholders and partners in order to foster relationships based on trust and

confidence. All of this we managed to achieve through sheer hard work. There were no short cuts and I had no magic wand in my hand. But what I did have that was of fundamental importance was the 'political will' and backing of the Jordanian Government from His Majesty the King way up top...all the way down to the deminer in the field. Hence the main message I would like to pass on to you today is that it is possible to do this good work. It is NOT impossible...it can be done and is doable!!! At the end of the day it is all about adopting a serious attitude.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

In addition to my work on the landmines issue in Jordan, I have had the honour and pleasure of being the 'Special Envoy' of the APMBC for 'universalization' for the last few years. It is a responsibility that I have taken very seriously and one that I have dedicated a great deal of my time and energy towards. In this regard however, I am now not alone. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations, gratitude and thanks to HRH Princess Astrid of Belgium and the famous Colombian singer/artist Juhannes for having also accepted to join this noteworthy cause as 'Special Envoys' for universalization. Their stature and ability to affect change at the highest of levels of government will be highly appreciated I am sure by all states parties in the near future.

The purpose behind this endeavour has been to try and engage the leaderships of the countries that have yet to accede to the APMBC on the landmine issue and to try to gently persuade them to think seriously about the issue. Some countries have very strong views about the APMBC and will most likely never accede. But for others the landmine cause has simply never been on the radar screen and is considered not a priority. It is these latter countries that we have targeted for the most part and have pinned our hopes upon. This being said, we have also endeavoured to open up channels of discussion with the 'big states,' or rather the complicated cases, such as the USA, China and South Korea. My role

has been to try to prompt a discussion on this issue and to get the leaders of these countries to take a fresh look at their landmine policy and to revisit their old assumptions.

During my universalization missions I have met with high-level government officials/leaders.... senior advisors, generals, chiefs of staff, deputy-ministers, ministers, prime ministers, a governor general and a crown prince. And for the most part, the conversations that I have had have been very positive and constructive. In many cases it was the first time ever that my hosts conversed about this subject. All in all...even though our success rate has been modest, I still believe it is essential that we continue to try to engage states not parties at the very highest of levels.

I have also come to realize that what is desperately needed...is that States Parties also throw their weight behind this initiative. I find it quite remarkable and perplexing at times how many donor countries especially are prepared to be unbelievably generous in their dispensation of financial support to mine action around the world and yet when it comes to universalization the overtures that they are prepared to make, whether they be demarches, letters, telephone calls or discussions at meetings between leaders, are often - if you will forgive me for saying - few and far between. Why is this the case? It doesn't make sense. I realize of course that it is not realistic to expect that the landmine issue will always be on the agenda at high level meetings between world leaders or ministers etc.... but wouldn't it be fantastic if it could be just for one month a year in the lead up to a Meeting of States Parties or if I can be so bold to say the Maputo Review Conference next year. If all states parties would commit to this idea and promise to cause a '**real**' stir for at least one month in the lead up to Maputo the likelihood that we will see some change I suspect will be much higher. I invite all State Parties to take up this challenge and agree to commit to it whether formally or informally.

As for me, I am prepared to continue in my role of 'Special Envoy' if it is the wish of all of you the States Parties. Already we have some plans in motion for 2014 with the main initiative so far being a visit to Moscow sometime early next year. I am very grateful to the Kingdom of Norway for supporting this whole universalization initiative in the beginning and am also thankful and very appreciative of the EU for its commitment towards this needed endeavor at present. Without the EU's financial support none of this would be possible.

I would like to end by saying how unbelievably indispensable the ISU has been and how much I appreciate and value the terrific work of Mr. Kerry Brinkert and his 'A' team. The ISU is the glue that keeps us all together 'on the straight and narrow' and I urge all States Parties to do their utmost to support the ISU financially in order for it to continue to do the magic that it has done so superbly over the years.

I thank you all and wish you all the best.