

**UNIVERSALIZATION- 13<sup>th</sup> MSP of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban  
Convention - STATEMENT OF BELGIUM**

Mr President,

The 13MSP is our last annual assessment of what we committed to do at the Cartagena Summit to universalize the Convention and its norms.

It is a chance to look backwards, but, more importantly, it is a time when we need to consider how we will pursue this important aim of the Convention as we enter the next phase in its life.

The Convention indicates that our ultimate mission is to end the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.

We cannot guarantee that we have achieved this mission until all States – and other actors – have forever foresworn the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel mines.

Just as with clearing mined areas, assisting the victims, and destroying stockpiled anti-personnel mines, our task of pursuing the universal acceptance of the Convention and its norms is not yet complete. If already 161 countries have signed the Convention, only 5 States adhered since the Review Conference in Cartagena in 2009.

The next review Conference is less than a year ahead and we are now entering a new phase of work and we have to think about how to do better and be more efficient in our universalization efforts.

Mr President,

As coordinator of the universalization contact group Belgium would like to report to the Assembly about what has been done recently to promote the convention.

During our meeting of the contact group last Monday, HRH Prince Mired debriefed us about his visit in China and his plans to visit Russia next year. We would like to thank him for his constant commitment to promote the convention of Ottawa.

His visit took place in the framework of the HLTF created by the EU decision of November 2012. HRH Princess Astrid of Belgium who has been committed to mine action for years too has accepted to take part in the HLTF together with Juanes the Colombian artist and mine ban activist. We are now planning a programme for her visits that should take place in February next year.

Belgium debriefed the group about the demarches we asked our bilateral embassies to do in Tonga, Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Lao PDR, Libya and Mongolia.

Several members of the contact group informed us about their demarches on universalization of the Convention : Canada about a visit of their Foreign Affairs Ministry in Lao PDR, Japan about demarches to Pakistan, South Korea, Vietnam and Lao .

Palau demarched the Marshall Islands, and the Federation of the States of Micronesia and will be organizing a workshop in the margin of the summit of the leaders of the Pacific.

The ICRC is planning to organize a regional seminar in 2014 for Vietnam, Lao PDR and Myanmar.

ICBL has demarched Myanmar and Libya.

Even if it is difficult to predict that any new country will adhere to the convention in the short term, it is important that all coordinated efforts continue coming from Special Envoys of the Convention, states, international organizations and NGO's to pursue the objective of making of the convention a universal instrument, knowing nevertheless that it will be a long process . There was a general view in the group that all State Parties should mobilize in the last run before the Maputo Review Conference and multiply the demarches to use the visibility that will be given to the Convention at this occasion.

Let me close by thanking those who have taken part in universalization in recent years .

Thank you Mr President