



ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross

**Statement on Universalization
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Meeting of States Parties
Vienna, Austria, 20 December 2017**

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This week, we have the opportunity to acknowledge the substantial progress that has been made in the two decades since 133 States committed to bringing an end to the use of anti-personnel mines and the suffering that these weapons cause.

Underlying this progress is the wide adherence of States, more than three-fourths of the countries in the world, to the Convention and their concerted efforts to implement its provisions. Among States Parties, the use of anti-personnel mines has stopped and more than 53 million stockpiled mines destroyed. The international trade in these weapons has virtually disappeared and there is improved assistance to victims and in the pace of clearance. We applaud the concerted efforts of States, international organisations and civil society in these areas.

The ICRC warmly congratulates Sri Lanka for acceding to the Convention last week, bringing to 163 the total number of States Parties. The ICRC was pleased to have engaged with Sri Lankan officials on several occasions to discuss the requirements of the Convention and its implementation. The adherence of Sri Lanka brings us a step closer to the end of the anti-personnel mines era and shows that steady and persistent engagement with States not yet party to the Convention can bear fruit.

Yet, it is clear that our work on universalization is not finished. As we have heard, there has been a disturbing increase in the number of mine-related casualties in the past two years. This is an appalling reminder of the need to continue and enhance our universalization efforts and draw attention to the contexts where such weapons are being used. In the ICRC's view, any use of anti-personnel mines is unacceptable.

Thirty-four States remain outside the Convention today. The ICRC urges these States to adhere without delay and, as urged by the ICRC President Maurer at the opening of this meeting, to reassess the need for these weapons in light of their limited military utility and their predictable and severe humanitarian harm.

The ICRC continues to promote adherence to the Convention in bilateral dialogue with these States not party to the Convention, in multilateral fora and in the numerous training sessions

on IHL we organise each year. We also provide technical support to National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies working in this area. We will continue these efforts and to contribute to the ongoing partnership with States Parties and other organisations to bring about universal adherence to the Convention as quickly as possible.

The ICRC would like to commend Prince Mired for his long commitment and efforts on universalization and to Austria for the leadership that it has shown during its Presidency. Their efforts and those of all other States Parties will continue to be essential as we advance the goal of universal adherence.

Finally, although it is not a formal item on the agenda, the ICRC would also like to take a moment to say a few words about the adoption of national legislation to implement the Convention. As we know from earlier meetings and the intersessional work there are a significant number of States Parties that have not yet adopted or adjusted national law to implement the core obligations of the Convention. Although this issue has not be the subject of dedicated discussion at this meeting, we continue to urge all States to adopt such legislation if they have not already done so.

Thank you.