

Statement on Universalization
17th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
26-30 November 2018



Madam President,

We can all be very proud that, twenty years on, this treaty keeps attracting new States Parties. It has been our pleasure to welcome Palestine and Sri Lanka in the past year. We hope that the accession of Sri Lanka will motivate and encourage India, Nepal and Pakistan in the South Asia region to join the Mine Ban Treaty as a peacebuilding measure, because the toll that antipersonnel landmines take on civilians far outweighs any military value these weapons are perceived to have.

Each year, many states not party explain their vote on the landmine resolution at First Committee by mentioning their support for the humanitarian aim of the treaty. To these, we would like to say: please transform your general support into specific action. Unless you are the government of Myanmar, you are not actively laying antipersonnel landmines at the moment. You will probably never use antipersonnel landmines. You most likely do not produce landmines. You might even be a donor to mine action. Please do the next right thing, and join the treaty. It is the best way to end the suffering caused by antipersonnel mines.

Madam President -- It is our collective responsibility to promote the treaty, and all States Parties have the means to do so. We were very pleased to hear about the efforts made under your Presidency to reach out to states not party, including the work of Special Envoy Prince Mired. Each member of this community should continue using all occasions to promote accession to the treaty, for instance by encouraging states not party to take interim steps toward joining.

Throughout 2018, the ICBL and its members spared no efforts to continue promoting universalization. In Azerbaijan, India, Myanmar, and Nepal, for example, campaign members disseminated research data, carried out bilateral meetings with governmental decision-makers, and raised awareness at the community level.

In the Korean Peninsula, a new episode seems to be opening, with mine clearance serving as one of the steps toward peacebuilding. ICBL members and national campaigns from Asia have made a public call, stating that "A peaceful united Korea is a landmine-free Korea." To the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, we respectfully say: there is a place for you here, and we trust we will see you on board the Mine Ban Treaty soon.

Dear delegates -- Landmines are being used in a more widespread manner by non-state armed groups than by states. The organization Geneva Call and other ICBL members engaged

with such groups this year. It is crucial that specialized agencies have access to areas under the control of non-state armed groups to engage them on the ban on antipersonnel mines and to encourage them to allow humanitarian mine action. We also call upon parties to current internal conflicts to conclude agreements on joint demining initiatives.

Finally, all States Parties should condemn any and all use of antipersonnel mines. By strengthening the stigma against landmines, you will help support universalization efforts.

Thank you.