



24-28 November 2008
Geneva | Switzerland
ap mine ban convention

Honour your commitment

Statement by the President of the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties H.E. Ambassador Jürg Streuli of Switzerland

24 November 2008

Your Royal Highness, Excellencies, Friends:

Please accept my gratitude for the confidence that you have expressed in me.

I am honoured to have been elected to serve as your President.

This is no ordinary task for a disarmament diplomat.

Rather the task is as special as the Convention itself.

This Convention is special in so many ways:

- This Convention has a clear preoccupation with human beings, their safety, their wellbeing and their rights.
- This Convention has produced meaningful, measureable results and has the potential for more in the years to come.
- The work of this Convention is carried out in a true spirit of cooperation.
- And the partnerships we, as States, have with civil society organizations make us stronger and ensure that our efforts are more successful.

We can, however, take none of this for granted:

- It is entirely up to us whether we remain focused on the humanitarian promise of this Convention.
- It is only through our deliberate actions that there will be further progress made in ending the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.
- Our spirit of cooperation needs constant nurturing through undying efforts to work together.
- And the partnerships that we have established require a constant recognition that self interest and collective interest are not incompatible.

Quite simply, we need to honour our commitment.

President of the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties
c/o AP Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit
Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining

And that is my appeal to you this week, to honour your commitment.

This commitment was not forced onto us but rather was something we embraced.

This commitment was not ambiguous but rather was clear cut and evident from the start.

- We made a commitment to eliminate stockpiled anti-personnel mines.
- We made a commitment to clear all mined areas.
- We made a commitment to assist the victims.
- We made a commitment to assist one another.
- And we made a commitment to never again to use anti-personnel mines.

We didn't commit to choosing from this list as if it were a menu.

Rather we accepted an integrated package of commitments and honouring this – that is, keeping our word – is precisely what is required of us if we are to end the landmine era.

At this meeting we are tasked with overcoming great challenges related to each one of our commitments.

While no one said it would be easy, no one can claim that overcoming these challenges is impossible.

All is possible, again, if we honour our commitment.

As we turn our attention to the task at hand this week, let us carry with us the inspiration provided by my predecessor and friend, His Royal Highness Prince Mired.

Your Highness – your contribution has been remarkable:

- You have met the greatest of challenges head-on.
- You have invested more time and energy into this effort than many would have thought humanly possible.
- You have been a living manifestation of your mantra – that *if there is a will, there is a way*.
- And you have done all of this for us while overseeing your State's implementation effort, which is a first class example of national ownership and responsibility.

Your Royal Highness – you have honoured your commitment.

It falls to all of us this week and beyond to live up to your example.