

**UNIVERSALIZATION- STATEMENT OF BELGIUM - PREPARATORY
MEETING OF THE MAPUTO REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Mr President,

As coordinator of the contact group on universalization, Belgium would like to share some initial thoughts about universalization that have briefly been shared with the contact group on Monday.

The Convention indicates that our ultimate mission is an end to 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. It must feature in the Maputo Action Plan and universalization efforts must continue beyond Maputo.

As we enter a new phase of work for the Convention, change will be required, including with respect to our universalization efforts. However, change means adapting to present-day circumstances rather than ending our efforts and prematurely declaring that the job is done.

-First: While the vast majority of States have joined the anti-mine movement, some that could have a significant impact on the achievement of our mission have not. These include several States that cling to the view that any marginal military utility they might perceive that they derive from anti-personnel mines outweighs the humanitarian impact of the use of this hideous weapon.

We must not be complacent, but at the same time we must be realistic. Some States cling so tightly to the idea that they might still defy our norms that they may not accede to the Convention any time soon. Therefore, how we measure success in universalization might not be limited to new accessions but also on the measures taken by States not party to adopt the norms of the Convention, thereby facilitating their ultimate accession. These measures might include formalized commitments not to export anti-

personnel mines, the termination of production, increased transparency on stocks held, and, perhaps, even the destruction of some or all of their stocks. We should also look for new and innovative opportunities for technical cooperation. Though the ultimate goal is making the convention universal these commitments could at least prevent antipersonnel mines creating more victims.

- Second: We might want to reflect upon how our generosity to assist one another can best be used to support those who have solemnly committed to this movement and to encourage others to head in the right direction. Other than in emergency situations, does it make sense for us to support the clearance of mines when the actors in question have not yet guaranteed that more mines might be put into the ground?

As we are about to head to Maputo for the Third Review Conference, we may wish to recall that it was in Maputo in 1999 at the First Meeting of the States Parties that we declared the following: "As a community dedicated to seeing an end to the use of anti-personnel mines, our assistance and cooperation will flow primarily to those who have sworn the use of these weapons forever through adherence to and implementation of the Convention." Perhaps we need to make this point abundantly clear and abide by it more explicitly taking into account that each country will allocate its aid on the basis of its own priorities and principles.

Third: We must both not only talk the talk of universalization, but walk the talk of universalization. It is not enough to simply say, "we need to do more to universalize the Convention" when, in fact, "we" are the "we". Universalization implies actual commitment and actions being taken accordingly.

These are initial thoughts and we would be happy to discuss that further with delegations.

Thank you Mr President