

APMBC Third Review Conference

Jordan - High Level Statement

26 June, 2014

Your Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium,
Mr. President,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

I would like to begin my speech by relaying to you all the best wishes of His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan and that of the people of Jordan. I would like to also convey my sincere thanks and gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Mozambique for the very warm hospitality afforded to my delegation and me. It is a great delight to be here and to participate in the **'Third Review Conference of the APMBC.'** I wish to whole-heartedly commend the government and people of Mozambique for their support and commitment towards this noble cause. It is of course at the end of the day all about saving lives and protecting the environment for future generations.

In my country Jordan, we once upon time had 500 minefields polluting our sacred land that contained of over 300,000 landmines...our land that was and still is the 'Holy Land.' The vast majority of these minefields were planted along our border areas some forty-seven years ago and earlier by our military. Our late king however, HM King Hussein bin Talal – God Bless His Soul - ordered the Jordanian military to begin clearing these minefields in 1993. He had come to realize the horrendous impact of landmines and took the decision to demine regardless of the political consequences. It was something that His Majesty believed had to be done for the betterment of his people. So for us in Jordan the process started twenty-one years ago and we officially declared completion in 2012. Of course in comparison to other mine-affected countries the problem that Jordan faced was relatively miniscule, however the impact was significant.

The question that people have often asked us has been...how did we get the job done? What did Jordan do that allowed it to demine its minefields? The simple answer is **'national ownership.'** Of course...there is no one-size-fits-all model. What worked in Jordan might not necessarily work elsewhere. However, demonstrating national ownership makes it significantly more likely that cooperation will flourish between those with needs and those in a position to provide assistance.

Despite our success in demining, we do still face challenges on the VA front. Jordan is unfortunately a member of the 'club of 26 states'...states that have reported to have

hundreds or thousands of survivors. We have provided assistance to our survivors in various forms and will continue to do so...but more and more we will integrate our efforts into a broader national disability framework that adopts a human rights-based approach. In addition to my responsibility as the Chairman of the 'National Committee for Demining & Rehabilitation,' I have recently been appointed as the President of Jordan's 'Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities.' So the challenge that I am personally facing is how to create synergy between the CRPD and the APMBC that will effectively address the needs of all persons with disabilities...without diluting the attention that landmine survivors deserve.

As for my efforts vis-à-vis universalization...it has truly been a great privilege to serve you the States Parties...as a 'Special Envoy' of the 'Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention' alongside Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium. Her Royal Highness's capacity to affect change is enormous and I feel extremely honoured to be working by her side. Her recent visit to Oman in particular, was highly successful and we now soon await the Sultanate's accession to the Convention. As for my humble effort...I have had the great honour...since Cartagena...of visiting several countries to discuss the possibility of accession to the APMBC. My conversations with the leaders of these countries were informative and worthwhile, since in many cases it was the first time that this topic was ever discussed. I for my part expressed my opinion how important it is that all nations join the APMBC, and that in my humble view the decision is NOT a military decision but rather a moral and ethical one that needs to be made. On this issue of universalization...I strongly feel that we the States Parties ought to be more ambitious. The APMBC has been successful for the States Parties but our ultimate goal is to make the APMBC successful globally. For this to happen we must strive to convince the States Not Party to the Convention that have tens of millions of landmines stockpiled, or emplaced in the ground and/or have thousands of survivors to accede ASAP. It is also important that the remaining countries...who have no history with landmines...to join as the Convention needs support and new blood. It is collectively our responsibility to make sure that the Convention stays healthy and vibrant...to keep donors interested and engaged for as long as possible until we reach a point when the Convention's goals have truly been fulfilled. For this to happen...States Parties have to commit more seriously to universalization...putting the issue on the agenda from time to time at high level meetings at the ministerial level and higher, making demarches, telephone calls etc. The bottom line is that we can't expect to have big results/achievements on universalization with out putting in a big effort. I am happy to continue serving as a Special Envoy but I implore all States Parties to weigh in as well. I must thank the EU (and the EU Council decision) for sponsoring this initiative...with out your generous support our efforts would not have come to fruition.

Before I conclude I would like to say how immensely impressed I and my delegation have always been and continue to be with the ISU. Kerry Brinkert and his team are remarkable individuals who must be commended for their professionalism and dedication to the cause that is really unmatched. Jordan honestly believes that for the Convention to stay robust and strong in the long run we MUST support the ISU more and make sure that it has ample space to flourish and maneuver. The ISU should not have to worry about financial constraints...after all the amounts requested by the unit on a yearly basis are relatively modest...considering that it serves 161 States Parties!

In conclusion...I would like to reaffirm my country's unyielding commitment to this noble cause. Even though we declared completion in 2012, we still remain active in 'mine action'...with the hope of focusing more and more in the near future on VA issues, MRE and training. As I mentioned earlier, our journey in mine action started 21 years ago and at times it has been a bumpy ride. But...thank goodness...with the hard work and dedication of all Jordanians who have worked in MA, the input of survivors and with the generosity of donors and partners we have been able to persevere and overcome the challenges. Hence...our humble message to all mine affected countries is don't lose faith...keep working hard...the task is doable...it just might take longer, cost a little more or require a bigger effort...but IT IS ultimately DOABLE.

I Thank You All.