

BELGIUM

Universalization

APMBC – 19th MSP – November 2021

Mr. President,

Let me first thank you wholeheartedly for all the efforts on outreach that you have carried out. Let me also pay tribute Special Envoy Prince Mired of Jordan for his tireless efforts.

We are very worried that, after a slowdown over the past years, we now seem to have come to a **stagnation in the universalization** of the Convention at 164 states parties. There have been no new ratifications or accessions since the last MSP. The lack of tangible progress towards universal membership of the Convention, combined with continuing high numbers of casualties of mines worldwide, is sad and alarming.

It is therefore more important than ever to **keep universalization high on our agenda** and to further strengthen our efforts to encourage states not parties to respect the Convention's norms and objectives and to consider accession to the Convention. We also realize that the challenging context of the ongoing pandemic requires us to be even more **creative in our working methods** to make the best use of all opportunities to promote the convention and its objectives.

The assistance of the Implementation Support Unit is a valuable asset in this regard, inter alia by keeping track of the positions regarding accession of States not yet party. This is the foundation upon which to develop a **universalization strategy**. This would help to improve advance planning and to set up a programme for priority advocacy efforts and diplomatic demarches.