



Belgium
Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the
Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines
Oslo, 25 – 29 November 2019

Universalization (agenda item 7 a.)

Mr President,

At the outset, let me express our appreciation for being here in Oslo, at the birthplace of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. The organization of the review conference in this beautiful city, twenty years after the entry into force, is a fitting demonstration of the continued commitment of Norway to achieve a world without mines. Let me assure you of the determination of my country to work towards the same goal and of the support of my delegation for the chair and his team. We thank you for the excellent preparatory work, Ambassador Brattskar. This will make our proceedings this week so much easier.

We have set the goal of a mine free world by 2025. A truly mine-free world requires determination and hard work, but also progress towards universal membership of the Convention. Unfortunately, we have seen a slowdown in the pace of new accessions and at the same time a dramatic increase in the number of casualties of mines worldwide. Even if non-state actors are largely responsible for the rise in casualties, the fact remains that our family of nations needs to grow to enlarge the scope of the Convention and to strengthen the legal norm against these weapons.

This is a common endeavor. The delegations gathered here have the collective responsibility to keep universalization high on the agenda of our political dialogue with States not yet party to the Convention. We are supported in our efforts by the dedication of the Implementation Support Unit, who inter alia keeps track of the positions of States not yet party. Let me also express our appreciation for the tireless efforts of Prince Mired.

Two months ago, Special Envoy Princess Astrid had the opportunity to lead a mission to Lebanon. We wish to convey our sincere gratitude to the authorities of Lebanon for their warm welcome and for the many steps they have taken over the years to support the goals of the Convention. We encourage Lebanon to pursue its efforts and to actively consider accession to the Convention.

While recent conflicts in the Middle East and the greater Sahel region have caused an upsurge in the use of improvised mines, other geopolitical developments may be

more favorable to our objectives. We welcome the fact that the easing of tension on the Korean peninsula has paved the way to some bold plans, such as the clearance of mines in the border area between north and south. This is the kind of evolution which should be encouraged by us all and seen as an opportunity to further the goals of the Convention.

Although such progress is to be welcomed, only a legally binding, universal ban can lead to a durable end to the use of mines.