

10th Anniversary of the 1997 Mine Ban Convention

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Dinner address

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Anniversaries are appropriate occasions to review results achieved and to renew commitments for the future.

10 years after the conclusion of the Oslo Diplomatic Conference for the Mine Ban Treaty, let us recognize, Royal Highnesses, Mr. Minister, Excellencies, Dear Friends of the Mine Action Community, let us recognize that our common commitment for a *Mine free world* has been a successful story or a success in progress, as it was said earlier today.

At the beginning of the nineties of last century, I could not continue to witness the persistent heavy suffering caused by antipersonnel mines. ICRC doctors and nurses were urging me to end human beings losing their lives or surviving severely wounded by this coward weapon. Surgical work in so many countries and orthopedic fitting centers were important, but one had to work for prevention! It was also necessary to match rhetoric with reality, principle with practice; one could not be content with reports and declarations. The time had come to assemble forces of civil

society to urge Governments to face humanitarian imperatives.

Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions – now recognized as Customary International Humanitarian Law applicable in all types of armed conflicts – is clearly stating the prohibition to use weapons causing serious injuries or superfluous suffering. My appeal of February 1994 was indeed intended also to motivate the 170 and more National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to adhere without reservations to the call *LANDMINES MUST BE STOPPED*. And they did it! In front of all the Norwegian Red Cross.

There was a need for a humanitarian legal commitment to ban antipersonnel landmines. The very limited progress in the CCW negotiations, because of the consensus practice, was unacceptable for victims and potential victims.

Therefore the launch by Lloyd Axworthy, the then Canadian Foreign Minister, with a tremendous commitment of civil society, assembled in ICBL and ICRC, of

negotiations for the Mine Ban Convention, concluded in Oslo, signed in Ottawa and ratified in record time.

1997 was the beginning of the end of antipersonnel mines! A particular gratitude is due to key negotiators, many of them present here, but indeed also to those working directly or indirectly for encouraging Governments to move: among them let us recall with deference and admiration the Princess of Wales, Lady D., who lost tragically her live at the eve of the Oslo Conference.

Mr. Minister I am particularly grateful for the opportunity you have given me to remember what moved me to be, since more then fifteen years, among the advocates for a world free from the threat and impact of antipersonnel mines. But let us look forward and not slow down our dynamics with a sense of complacency. The still thousands of yearly victims of landmines ask us to take very seriously the Nairobi Action Plan and to have no hesitation in its implementation. The Dead See Conference of next November gives us also the opportunity of

continuing to work for universalisation. The GICHD and the ISU are committed to it as they are to human security in general.

And last but by all means not least, let me underline the commitment we should all have in stopping the disasters of cluster munitions. Ten years after the Oslo Conference on landmines, another Oslo Process has started in parallel with a timid CCW dynamic. How many similarities with the Ottawa Process! Let us be encouraged by its success story, to be successful also in bringing under control the tremendous threat constituted for civilian population by cluster munitions.

Distinguished Government Representatives, dear Friends of the Mine Action Community we have again to be prepared to act.

RES, NON VERBA !

DEEDS, NOT WORDS !