



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Statement by His Excellency Mr. Alain Girma,
Ambassador, Special Assistant to the Director of Strategic Affairs, Security and
Disarmament, Secretary General of the French National Commission for the
Elimination of Anti-Personnel Mines**

Second Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention

**Session on universalization
(Cartagena, 1 December 2009)**

Madam President,

I would like to set out to the States Parties to the Convention the efforts made by France to promote the universalization of the Convention.

France has clearly demonstrated its constant commitment to the universalization of the Ottawa Convention by being one of the first countries to sign and ratify the Convention and by mobilising its diplomatic apparatus on numerous occasions in order to promote its universalization.

To date, 156 States are parties to the Convention. Others are effectively applying most of its provisions, although this cannot be considered to be an alternative to accession. While it is not yet “universal”, the Convention has established a standard and stigmatized the use of anti-personnel mines, which today are used by just two countries. This represents great progress, but we are still not satisfied with the situation.

As you know, for the past two years, this universalization process has been slow. Indeed, since 2007, there have been no new accessions, and 39 States have still not signed the Convention. The interest expressed by Laos, Morocco and Mongolia in the past few years has been confirmed to the extent that these States have suggested that they will sign the Convention in the near future. The accession of these three countries would constitute significant progress for the universalization of the Convention. However, many more efforts need to be made to this end.

At a time when the Ottawa Convention, which has had great success, is seeking a new lease of life, France intends to remain actively committed to its universalization. It wishes to inform the States Parties of the next steps, which will be taken through its Embassies, in order to encourage States not parties to the Convention to sign and ratify it.

It is vital that the universalization of the Convention continue, as it not only contributes to the fight against anti-personnel mines, but also to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the consolidation of international humanitarian law.

France therefore calls upon all States who have not yet done so to accede to the Convention so that the large numbers of anti-personnel mines remaining in States not parties to the Convention may be eliminated.

France welcomes the presence of representatives from the United States of America here in Cartagena, which shows that country's interest in the efforts made within the Ottawa Convention to eliminate anti-personnel mines. This presence is a clear sign of the strength of the international standard that is the Ottawa Convention.

These, Madam President, were the points on the universalization of the Convention which France wanted to communicate to its fellow States Parties.

Madam President, thank you very much.