



STATEMENT BY THE SPECIAL ENVOY HER ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS ASTRID, PRINCESS OF BELGIUM

It is my pleasure to be here with you today in this beautiful city of Beirut in my capacity as Special Envoy of one of the most important humanitarian disarmament treaties to date: the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention also known as the Ottawa Convention.

The year 2019 marks the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of this international instrument which requires its members to ban the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel mines, destroy them and provide assistance to the victims of these indiscriminate weapons.

Over 80% of the world's States have already joined this landmark treaty and destroyed over 52 million anti-personnel mines. My hope... and that of the entire Convention's membership... is that the Lebanese Republic could soon join the growing family of States Parties.

I am grateful for the meeting with His Excellency Michael AOUN, with whom I have spoken about Lebanon's important, **perhaps decisive role**, towards achieving the Convention's ultimate humanitarian goal in a region that remains much underrepresented.

I have encouraged Lebanon to attend ---- as an Observer ----- the global anti-landmine summit: *The Oslo Review Conference on a Mine-Free World*, to be held in Norway next month.

I also encourage Lebanon to submit a voluntary report on the state of play of the mine situation in the Lebanese Republic and continue its steady progress towards joining this noble treaty.

Most of all, I am extremely encouraged by Lebanon's goodwill in keeping with the prohibitions and norms set by the Convention... I am also extremely encouraged by the Lebanese authorities' expressed desire to meet the needs of those who have survived the explosion of these weapons.