

BURUNDI Statement regarding Article 4 of Ottawa Convention – ISC Geneva 23 April 2007

The Republic of Burundi signed the Mine Ban treaty on 3 December 1997, ratified it on 22 October 2003, and became a State Party on 1 April 2004.

In all of its Article reports, Burundi declared a stockpile of 1,212 POMZ-2M antipersonnel mines. This included 1,200 mines held by the National Defense Forces (FDN) and 12 from the former armed opposition, Conseil National pour la Defense de la Democratie - Forces pour la Defense de la Democratie (CNDD-FDD).

Reports up to date stated that the inventories of stocks were still in progress and the number of mines held by different forces remained to be confirmed due to the on-going low-level conflict at this time.

However in March 2007, after carefully review the inventory, the number of AP mines is much less important than was previously declared. In 2007, the National Defense Forces (FDN) declared that the current stockpile is only of 610 antipersonnel mines.

As of April 2007, the destruction of stockpiled antipersonnel mines had not yet begun. Burundi's treaty -mandated deadline for completion of stockpile destruction is 1 April 2008.

In February 2005, UN peacekeepers in Burundi reportedly destroyed thousands of weapons including 3 antipersonnel mines.

It is planned that the Burundi first phase of stockpile destruction will take place in May 2007 with 50 AP mines from the stock (POMZ-2M) and 110 AP mines (TS 50) from the formers combatants and the arms cache discovered in the provinces of the country. The delay was attributable to the severe raining season and political constraints.

Through the European Union Contribution to UNDP, which allows the programme to reach the vision of a Burundi mine free and bring a measurable benefit to the local population within the year 2008, UNDP is currently providing technical assistance to the preparation of the destruction process.

Since August 2006, UNDP is the key facilitator in the coordination of the mine action sector through its support for the Burundi mine action coordination centre, providing technical advice to the Government of Burundi in its efforts to assume an increasing role in national coordination of mine action.