



Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer
of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

PRESIDENT OF THE FIRST REVIEW CONFERENCE

**Overview of the general status of implementation:
Update on the pursuit of the aims of the Nairobi Action Plan**

13 June 2005

**H.E. Wolfgang Petritsch
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations**

and

President of the First Review Conference

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It has been the practice since 2002 that the Convention's President sets the scene for the meetings of the Standing Committees by providing an overview of the general status and operation of the Convention. Because we now have an agreed action plan for the period 2005-2009, I have organized my presentation according to the framework of the Nairobi Action Plan. Let me therefore first turn to the issue of universalization.

Universalization:

At the close of the Nairobi Summit, 143 States had ratified or acceded to the Convention and Ethiopia had announced that it had completed ratification procedures. Ethiopia subsequently deposited its instrument of ratification with the Convention's depository on 17 December 2004 and the Convention entered into force for it on 1 June. Hence our numbers now stand at 144.

However, I am pleased to have learned of the tremendous progress made by at least two States not yet parties – Ukraine and Vanuatu – towards formal acceptance of the Convention. In addition, I recall that in September of 2004 Bhutan informed the United Nations Secretary-General of Bhutan's intention to join the Convention this year. Later this morning, I am confident that we'll hear more good news regarding universalization.

I am pleased that universalization efforts have continued apace. This is an important manifestation of the actions #1 through #8 of the Nairobi Action Plan in which we agreed that "universal adherence will remain an important object of cooperation among States Parties." I am confident that if we continue the momentum seen in recent weeks our numbers could approach 150 by the time of the Sixth Meeting of the States Parties.

Stockpile Destruction:

As regards Stockpile Destruction, the States Parties indicated in the Nairobi Action Plan their resolve to sustain progress in that regard in order to meet "the Convention's humanitarian aims and disarmament goal during the 2005-2009 period." In addition, through actions #9 to #12, it was recorded that "the 16 State Parties yet to complete their destruction programmes will assess the extent of their tasks, establish appropriate national and local capacities to meet their obligations, strive to complete their destruction programmes if possible in advance of their four-year deadlines, and make their problems, plans progress and priorities for assistance known."

Since the Nairobi Summit considerable progress has been made: States Parties like Bangladesh have reported the completion of its destruction programme and others like Algeria have demonstrated – in a commendably transparent manner – progress towards completion. The number of States Parties for which Article 4 obligations remain relevant has now been reduced to 14 and if the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction have their way, this number could likely be further reduced in time for the meeting in Zagreb. That is, the Co-Chairs have set the ambitious – but achievable – goal that by the close of the Sixth Meeting of the States Parties stockpile destruction will be an obligation relevant for at the most 8 States Parties. I look forward to seeing such progress materialize in coming months.

Mine Clearance:

Let me now turn to the issue of mine clearance. In the Nairobi Action Plan, we agreed that successfully meeting deadlines for mine clearance "will be the most significant challenge to be addressed in the coming five years and will require intensive efforts by mine-affected States Parties and those in a position to assist them." At the close of the Nairobi Summit, 47 States Parties were still

in the process of fulfilling mine clearance obligations. Since that time, I understand that one States Party – Suriname – has fulfilled its clearance obligations.

Given that 24 States Parties have clearance deadlines that fall on or before 1 January 2010, we must place an intensive focus on this matter – this week and in coming months. Four States Parties have already demonstrated that it is possible to fulfill the obligation of undertaking “to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control” well within a ten-year period. This gives us hope that many more will do the same.

When considering our imperative to clear mined areas in accordance with Article 5 obligations, it is important to remember that this article is a cornerstone in the Convention’s aim of ending for all people, for all time, the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines. Article 5 obligations make it clear that addressing only part of the impact of anti-personnel mines is not only insufficient, it is inconsistent with the legal obligations contained in that provision. All impacts present and future must be addressed – that is to say, once again, all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under a States Party’s jurisdiction or control” must be cleared – whether they pose humanitarian problems, have a development implication or concern peace building, reconciliation and disarmament.

Victim Assistance:

As concerns victim assistance Article 6.3 of the Convention calls for States Parties to provide assistance for the care, rehabilitation and reintegration of mine victims. The Nairobi Action Plan notes that “this constitutes a vital promise for hundreds of thousands of mine victims around the world, as well as for their families and communities” and that “keeping this promise is a crucial responsibility of all States Parties, though first and foremost of those whose citizens suffer the tragedy of mine incidents.”

A major gain was made in Nairobi in that our attention became focused on 23 States Parties where there are vast numbers of victims. The Nairobi Action Plan notes that “these States Parties have the greatest responsibility to act, but also the greatest needs and expectations for assistance.” Since Nairobi, with the ratification of the Convention by Ethiopia, the number of States Parties which have reported the responsibility for hundreds or thousands of landmine survivors is now 24. Ensuring the full application of actions #29 through #39 in the Nairobi Action Plan will be necessary to ensure that a real and meaningful difference is made in the lives of survivors in these and other countries.

To ensure that progress by 2009 in victim assistance is concrete and measurable, and to ensure that plans are at place to realize this progress, the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance have embarked on an important exercise of assisting the 24 most pertinent States Parties in developing objectives and plans for 2009. I understand that two regional workshops have taken place and that efforts in this regard will continue throughout the year.

Other matters essential for achieving the Convention’s aims:

Concerning other matters essential for achieving the Convention’s aims, allow me touch upon a few highlights.

In the Nairobi Action Plan, we recognized that fulfilling our obligations during the period 2005-2009 and applying the Action Plan will require substantial political, financial and material commitments. And, we remarked on the substantial amount of money that had been generated since 1997 for matters that are consistent with the Convention’s aims. However, in Nairobi, we also noted that cooperation and assistance is about a lot more than simply money: It’s also about finding new sources of support and ensuring that finite resources are well spent. In this regard, I commend the Coordinator and members of the Resource Mobilization Contact Group for efforts to highlight pertinent matters, including the efficiency and effectiveness of mine action and the mainstreaming of mine action through broader humanitarian, development, peace-building and peace support programmes.

In the Nairobi Action Plan we also recognized that transparency and effective information exchange will be crucial to fulfilling our obligations during the period 2005-2009. In the lead-up to the Nairobi Summit, we achieved a reporting rate that exceeded 80 percent. My hope is that we will do the same this year, although I present I believe the reporting rate in 2005 stands at only 47 percent.

Also with respect to the exchange of information, we agreed “to provide information on the plans requiring the retention of mines (in accordance with Article 3) for the development of and training in mine detection, mine clearance, or mine destruction techniques and report on the actual use of retained mines and the results of such use.” The Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention have provided space for such an information exchange this week and I encourage all relevant States Parties to make use of this opportunity.

Actions #59 through #64 concern “preventing and suppressing prohibited activities, and facilitating compliance.” I am pleased that together national commitments and a spirit of cooperation are ensuring full compliance with the Convention. In this regard, I am pleased that since Nairobi at least four States Parties have reported the adoption of legislation in the context of Article 9 obligations.

Finally, with respect to implementation support, the mechanisms that we have at our disposal, including those like the Implementation Support Unit at the GICHD which exist pursuant to the decisions of the States Parties, have continued to serve us well. In the Nairobi Action Plan, we expressed our commitment to supporting these mechanisms. I therefore look forward to hearing indications of this support during relevant agenda items this week. Personally, having worked very closely with the Implementation Support Unit for the in preparation of the Nairobi Summit, at the Summit itself and now in the intersessional period, I wish to express my sincere appreciation and thanks for the enormous amount and high quality of the work the ISU has carried out so far with an astonishingly small number of staff.

I hope that my introduction has given justice to the progress made since we last met in Nairobi and look forward for lively discussion.

Thank you.