

**02 June 2008**

**SPEECH BY MR. VU TRAN PHONG**

**(DELEGATE OF VIET NAM)**

Mr. Chairman,

1/ In our perspective, the issue of anti-personnel landmines should have been approached as an issue that has complex and multitude aspects with humanitarian concerns and legitimate security requirements of countries concerned needed to be considered altogether.

In the humanitarian spirit, our Government shares the view that the proliferation of anti-personnel landmines and their indiscriminate and irresponsible use have inflicted a vast amount of needles harm and sufferings, especially on civilians. We therefore have joined the world community to welcome the various bans, moratoria and other restrictions already declared by States on anti-personnel landmines as well as the growing consensus against the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines against civilians. While we strictly observe our policy not to export this kind of weapons, we believe that other effective activities and measures, for example in the fields of mine clearance and victims assistance, should be taken so as to ensure that the effected countries have full access to materials, equipment, technologies and financial resources in order for them to reduce their civilian sufferings.

In the security concern, we are of the view that any efforts to ban landmines should take into account the legitimate national security concerns of states as well as their legitimate rights to use appropriate measures for self-defense. We support the humanitarian aspects of the Ottawa Convention of Anti-personnel Landmines but we could not sign it yet as it regrettably does not duly take into account the legitimate security concerns of many countries including Vietnam.

2/ The continued presence of mines and explosive remnants of war had long undermined the economic and social development of affected countries. The United Nations had placed great importance in providing assistance to such countries, having set up an efficiently executed mine-

action strategy to eliminate obstacles posed by that unexploded ordnance. The Government of Viet Nam appreciated its mine-action policy of 2001-2005, whose goals were almost entirely accomplished, and also supported the Inter-Agency Mine Action Strategy of 2006-2010.

Viet Nam has undergone 30 years of war, with unexploded mines being a serious problem. So far, some 15 million metric tonnes of mines and explosive devices had been cleared with help from the international community. People are still threatened by mines scattered in various parts of the country, however, and every year, despite assistance from 35 international and non-governmental organizations, the Government still has 350,000 to 800,000 metric tonnes of unexploded ordnance to clear. Viet Nam looks forward to continued international cooperation to complete the task of clearing mines and unexploded ordnance.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.