



STATEMENT BY THE GAMBIAN DELEGATION AT THE 10TH MEETING OF STATE PARTIES TO THE ANTI-PERSONAL MINE BAN CONVENTION HELD IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND FROM 29TH NOVEMBER TO 4TH DECEMBER 2010.

May I once again congratulate you Mr. President on your election as President of the 10th meeting of State Parties to the Mine Ban Convention and to thank Ambassador Susan Ecky for her laudable leadership during the past year. A big thanks to Switzerland for the hospitality accorded to all of us during this meeting.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates.

There are no known mine contaminated areas in The Gambia. The suspected areas lie along our southern border with the Senegalese Region of Cassamance, which for the past 2 decades has experienced armed conflict. The nature of our borders is such that people move freely from one end to another, thus exposing them to landmines as happened about 2 years ago, when some school children stepped on a landmine in the area bordering the Gambian village of Gillanfari in the Foni Bintang District, killing 2 and severely injuring 1.

In early October this year, members of a faction of the separatist MFDC Rebel Movement fought among themselves, during which some elements crossed into the Gambia with their arms and ammunitions. The Gambian Armed Forces intercepted and arrested them. A thorough search of the area was also conducted which resulted in the discovering of weapons including 3 anti-personal mines. If these weapons had not been recovered by the Army, they could pose a risk to the communities living in the area.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, The Gambia does not have any Article 5 obligations, none-the-less I am glad to inform this august gathering that we have submitted our Article 7 Transparency report for the reporting year 2010. In collaboration with partners like UNICEF, the United States government and local civil society organizations, The Gambia Government conducts Mine Risk Education sessions for communities in the affected areas. Community based trainers are also being trained and the warning billboards in the area are well maintained.

The Gambia also has a well trained and fully equipped Humanitarian Demining Team which is always ready to respond to any emergencies.

In conclusion Mr. President, I wish to express the Gambia's solidarity and support for the Article 5 extension requests made by Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Chad and Zimbabwe and

also commend Zambia for her proposal of a Standing Committee on Resource Mobilization International Cooperation and Assistance.

In this regard, please be reassured of my country's continued indefatigable efforts in the propagation and implementation of the Mine Ban Convention.

I thank you for your kind attention.