

New!

NIGERIAN STATEMENT

AT

**THE 10TH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE OTTAWA
CONVENTION**

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

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BY

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Mr. President,

Nigeria would like to report on her efforts in recent times in the implementation of the Ottawa Convention. It was recently discovered that some mines and UXOs existed in certain states of the south eastern region of the country where a civil war was fought over 40 years ago, precisely between 1967 and 1970. In actual fact, at the end of the war, the Nigerian Government had used the Armed Forces and Police deminers to clear the war arena of mines and UXOs, including locally fabricated mines called OGBUNIGWE. Some must have been inadvertently left behind. Therefore in 2008, the Nigerian Government carried out humanitarian demining to free all lands in that part of the country from danger and accident caused by unexploded Remnants of War (ERW). This action was also taken in implementation of the relevant provision of the Ottawa Convention, in particular Article 5. The demining was carried out by a private demining contracting/consulting company called RSB Holding Limited.

The Government further constituted an inter-ministerial Committee to monitor the activities of the Contractor. Specifically, four (4) cities and their environs namely: Enugu, Owerri, Port-Harcourt and Makurdi were cleared in the exercise. We can report to this august assembly that there are no more landmine contaminated areas in Nigeria after the extensive exercise. Nevertheless, to take care of any reports that may come up of ERW, the consultant is kept on site to carry out any required action. Nigeria is therefore confident that by the March 2012 deadline for demining, there should be no more ERWs in the civil war affected areas and all lands will be free for normal use. Indeed, the lands have

— A total of 4863 ERWs were destroyed. The destroyed ERWs consisted of 101 POM2² types, 61 locally fabricated mines called Ogbunigwe and 15 70mm M114.

already been released to the inhabitants. And I seize this opportunity to acknowledge request of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) to visit Nigeria in order to confirm that Nigeria is mine-free. That request currently undergoing administrative processing and ISU will hear from us soon, so that they can assist in the drafting of our Declaration of Completion, to be formally tendered thereafter.

Mr. President,

I also need to mention that prior to the commencement of mine clearance in Nigeria, there was an extensive sensitization exercise as well as advocacy on mine risk education in order to prevent accidents among the people of the area. That in part contributed to the successful conduct of the humanitarian demining exercise because, inhabitants of the areas were able to lead de-miners to some contaminated areas. I recall that at the June meeting, we had reported elaborately on activities in the area of mine risk education as well as in the area of victim assistance. Since then, there has been no new report of ERWs explosion, accident or injury.

I wish to give a brief update of Nigeria's action in response to the Cartagena Action Plan. In connection with Victim Assistance, as it was reported in June by the Nigerian delegation, total number of landmine victims in Nigeria stands at 367, out of which 64 are physically incapacitated. The Government has collated an extensive data base on the victims. This includes the nature of their injuries. A need assessment programme is already in place, aimed at identifying the specific areas of needed assistance of each victim. This is part of the comprehensive master plan of the Government which has already made provision for these victims of mines, UXOs and ERW in the current budget of the Defence Ministry. This provision is expected to take care of their medical care, rehabilitation, social re-integration,

Already delivered

skill development, self help, vocational training, income generation, basic education as well as assistance to their families. This means that in the meantime, victim assistance will be a part of the defence ministry's annual budget and in the nearest future, ERW victims and other disabled persons will be brought together under a common platform. Nigeria also recently ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Having said this, I would like to assure that Nigeria is fully committed to the letter and spirit of the Ottawa Convention, as we are up to date in rendering our annual transparency report. Furthermore, I wish to confirm that administrative and legislative procedures for the domestication of the OTTAWA Convention are in progress. The Government recently constituted an inter-ministerial Committee under the Federal Ministry of Justice to review the status of all treaties or instruments in the International Humanitarian Laws with a view to advise on their implementation at the national level. Indeed, the intention of Government is to stigmatize and criminalize nationwide the use, local production, stockpiling and transfer of those inhumane items such as mines in Nigeria.

I will conclude by assuring that Nigeria remains an advocate of the full implementation of the Ottawa Convention and a conscientious believer in the attainment of a mine free world.

Thank you for your attention.