

DRAFT

AMBASSADOR GABRIEL ZEPEDA'S SPEECH

**HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF CHILE TO THE 11th MEETING OF THE STATES
PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE,
STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER OF ANTIPERSONNELMINES
AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION.**

Cambodia, November 27-December 2, 2011

Mr. President,

This is the first time that we take the floor, let me please congratulate you on your election as President of the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their destruction. I wish to express our greatest commitment and willingness to cooperate in ensuring the success of this Meeting and of the work to be developed during the next year.

Likewise, I wish to express our appreciation to the outgoing President of the Tenth Conference of the States Parties, Ambassador Gazmend Turdiu of Albania, for his outstanding work during his mandate.

Mr. President,

The existence of anti-personnel mines still presents ethical and political challenges for the international community. Chile has the conviction and willingness to continue with the effective implementation of the Convention. About 110 million mines have been buried in more than 70 countries, causing thousands of victims, mostly women and children. In the past 50 years, anti-personnel mines have caused more fatalities and injuries than any other weapon of mass destruction. Humanitarian protection and assistance to victims is part of our responsibility to build a new international order in which human security should be at the core of policy decisions and multilateral action.

Mr. President,

We believe that political commitment to the convention should be reflected in a new and greater collective effort to give the Implementation Support Unit (ISU), conditions that guarantee the continuity and efficiency of its work, which we believe, are exemplary. This unit is an appropriate way to channel cooperation for the appropriate implementation of the Convention.

Providing the Implementation Support Unit with a budget consistent with the task entrusted is an imperative. We believe that a biannual budget would help to plan activities in a more effective and predictable way. For these reasons, the Delegation of Chile will support the work plan and budget recently approved by the Coordination Committee.

We welcome the reduction of about 12% of the ISU budget for 2012, without affecting the implementation work of the Convention.

Due to the fact that it is not part of the discussion agenda, the definition of a budget model that goes beyond voluntary contributions to finance the ISU budget will remain a pending task.

Mr. President,

The Cartagena Action Plan is an invaluable route guidance for the implementation of the Convention in its different areas of application. In this context, we express our acknowledgement to the efforts done by the Special Envoy appointed by the President of the Tenth Conference of States Parties, His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Al-Hussein of Jordan.

While universalization should remain a priority objective of the Convention, we should privilege the depth of achievement. We do not believe that it is appropriate to take measures that could mean a relaxation of the commitments to eliminate, prohibit and destroy anti-personnel mines.

Mr. President,

The assistance to the victims remains an important element in the task to be performed. It is a moral and legal obligation that for different circumstances has proven difficult to satisfy. Chile is preparing a draft law that is in its final stage of technical and financial consultation. Then it will start a broad consultation process with civil society, prior to its submission to the legislative process. It is noted that the draft in its entirety addresses the issue of assistance to the victims, not only those defined in the Ottawa Convention, but also in the Oslo Convention and in the one on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Mr. President,

The Government of Chile has made an application for extension in the deadline for completing mine clearance, in accordance with the provisions of art. 5 of the Convention and as agreed in the Cartagena Action Plan. The complexity of the terrain and extreme weather conditions, together with the need to protect the deminers' lives, have made the presentation of this application an imperative need in order to fulfill our commitments.

As reported in the inter-sessional meeting (General Committee) held in Geneva last June, the National Demining Commission has completed its demining work in 23% of the mined territory. Demining sectors that represent a greater risk to the population and the development of human activities has been prioritized. Now, the work will continue in more remote areas. Regarding this issue, we must add that all the minefields that still exist in the country, are properly identified, marked and closed.

Mr. President,

With satisfaction we see that the Convention comes to life in terms of cooperation among countries. It is now ready to be signed with the Argentinean authorities, an Aero-medical evacuation agreement, which will, in case of accidents, immediate transport of the demining personnel to Argentinean healthcare facilities in Tierra del Fuego. This agreement will strengthen safety standards in the work being done in that area.

Initiatives of this kind are another example of the countless possibilities for cooperation.

In this regard, the Government of Chile has done diverse professional exchanges, especially with the neighboring countries, in the spirit of strengthening links in this area as well as bonds of trust and cooperation.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, my delegation will address these issues in greater depth in the various thematic debates that will take place during the development of this Conference.

Thank you very much.