

11th Meeting of the State Parties of the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction*

Phnom Penh, 28th of November – 2nd of December 2011

Statement by Finland, Monday, 28th November 2011

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your assumption to the chair of this important meeting. I can assure you of my delegation's full co-operation and support. ~~{Finland fully associates itself with the statement of the European Union. JOS PIDETÄÄN}~~

Mr. President,

Finland will join the Ottawa Convention soon. The Parliament of Finland approved the accession three days ago, on Friday last, and the Government of Finland is now in the process of finalizing the decision. This means that we will deposit our instrument of accession with the UN Secretary-General in the coming weeks.

Finland has always had a responsible mine policy. Our mines have been acquired for defensive purposes only and they have been stored in stockpiles that are in the possession of the Finnish Defence Forces. There are no minefields in Finland, and we do not produce nor export anti-personnel mines.

As a member of the Ottawa Convention, Finland will follow this same responsible policy. We will fully comply with the Ottawa Convention as we have done with all other arms control and disarmament agreements we have joined. We will destroy our anti-personnel mines according to the provisions of the Ottawa Convention and fulfill also all other obligations set to a State Party by the Convention.

Mr. President,

Anti-personnel mines cost lives, cause injuries and hinder development around the world long after conflicts have receded. The Ottawa Convention banning their use, stockpiling, production and transfer is a key instrument for addressing these issues and preventing them from reoccurring. Although most countries have now banned anti-personnel mines, the universalisation of the Ottawa Convention is still as important as it has been during the existence of the Convention. Finland will promote the universalisation of the Ottawa Convention also in the future.

Finland considers humanitarian mine action as an integral part of early recovery and support to partner countries' longer term rehabilitation and development efforts. Humanitarian mine action plays an important role in the transition from conflict to sustained peace. Integration of mine action in a country's poverty reduction strategy and development plans is a prerequisite for achieving the objectives of the Ottawa Convention.

Since the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention in 1999, Finland has contributed more than fifty-eight million euro to humanitarian mine action. We have supported mine action in several countries through our partner organizations. This year, our support is directed to three countries in Africa and three in Asia, including the host country of this meeting of the State Parties. Support by Finland is based on a comprehensive approach. For us, mine detection and clearance, assistance for the care, rehabilitation and social and economic integration of mine victims as well as support to mine awareness projects are mutually reinforcing and complementary.

Finland's contribution to humanitarian mine action in 2011 amounts to five point three million euro's. We intend to increase our mine action funding, subject to parliamentary approval, so as to reach the level of 6 million euro annually by 2014. As demining will continue to be a challenge both in scale and complexity, we must mobilize new donors to support humanitarian mine action.

Thank you, Mr. President.