

Statement of Brazil to the Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Mr. President,

Let me first congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the 18th Meeting of the States Parties of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We acknowledge the difficulties for organizing such an important meeting in these strange times. You can count on the full support of the Brazilian delegation while conducting our works this week.

Mr. President

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is a hallmark in the international efforts to mitigate humanitarian suffering, save lives and preserve human dignity. It encompasses the very notion of incompatibility of certain methods and means of warfare with international humanitarian law. The Convention enshrines the notion that we cannot afford losing our humanity in times of conflict. Every step taken in freeing the world of the scourge of anti-personnel mines is a step towards protecting the innocent and away from malice. Brazil has supported the Convention from its beginning, and was one of the first States to sign and ratify it. Indeed, Brazil has been engaged in promoting capacity-building initiatives for decontamination and demining abroad even before the Convention entered into force. Brazil has no mined fields or contaminated areas. The assistance mechanisms conveyed by the APLC are more beneficial to other state parties; yet we remain constructively engaged in the Convention. Our participation in this instrument adds up to our disarmament credentials as a peace-loving country with a stern belief in the value of international cooperation. We acknowledge with satisfaction the fact that 164 States are already Parties to the Convention and emphasize the importance of its universalization in order to fully achieve its ultimate goal, a world without anti-personnel landmines. We therefore urge all States still outside the Convention to endeavor renewed efforts to accede to it as soon as possible.

Mr. President,

Brazil keeps a permanent capacity for humanitarian demining, as means to maintain preparedness, participate in UN mandated peace missions, and provide international cooperation. The Brazilian Armed Forces support permanent teams for destruction, recovery and neutralization of explosives and unexploded ordnance. Areas used in military trainings undergo strict cleaning processes. Brazil keeps a reduced number of stockpiles for training purposes only, in accordance with article 3, as dully informed in our annual national reports. Demining training is essential to maintain existing capacities in humanitarian demining. The training allows for the Brazilian assistance to other countries, and will remain a necessity as long as there are minefields in the world.

Mr. President,

International cooperation is one of the pillars of the Convention, to which Brazil gives particular importance. Brazil has a long history in humanitarian demining. Since 1994, over 370 Officers from the Brazilian Army and Navy have participated in demining operations, most notably in South- and Central America, as well as in Africa, under the aegis of the UN and of the Organization of American States. One particular priority of Brazil in this field is the training of national experts, both civilian

and military, in humanitarian demining techniques. By internalizing the capacity to conduct demining operations, training has a multiplier effect, strengthening national institutions and ownership of the clearing process. Brazil has supported training in humanitarian demining in, among other States, Angola, Cabo Verde, Colombia, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique.

Mr. President,

We take note of the reports, conclusions and recommendations presented by the Convention's four committees, and commend all coordinators for their efforts and the excellency of the work carried out. Brazil congratulates all parties involved in the discussions to sort out the obstacles first presented and highlights that cooperation and dialogue are the most effective tools to resolve controversies on the implementation of the Convention. Brazil also presents its compliments to the delegation of Chile, and greatly appreciates the announcement that the country has met its demining obligations within the deadline set under the Ottawa Convention, destroying more than one hundred and seventy thousand mines in the process. Those valuable efforts indeed set a good example of commitment to the Convention and its spirit. Lastly, Brazil reiterates its support to the Oslo Action Plan. We look forward to the discussions ahead.

I thank you Mr. President.