



**FIFTH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE
OTTAWA CONVENTION**

NEW ZEALAND STATEMENT

Mr President,

It is a pleasure to see you presiding over this, the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Thailand for hosting this meeting and for its generous hospitality. We look forward to working with you, Mr President, and learning from the experiences of Thailand, a mine affected country and long time and constructive supporter of the Ottawa Convention.

New Zealand continues to be a steadfast supporter of the Ottawa Convention, an instrument that is not only of disarmament significance but, more importantly, a humanitarian instrument that has set a leading example. We remain committed to realising the objective of a world free of anti-personnel mines.

The first step in realising this goal has been securing the commitment of so many countries to the Ottawa Convention. Universalisation presents a particular challenge for the Asian region. Our own Pacific neighbourhood has been fortunate in remaining free of anti-personnel mines. New Zealand has been working with our Pacific neighbours in a shared effort to keep the Pacific free of anti-personnel mines. The non-membership of certain Pacific states is not through a lack of political will. The Ottawa Convention must compete for relatively limited administrative resources with other priorities such as human rights, environment and other disarmament treaties in these small countries. New Zealand has contributed NZ\$30,000 to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines to facilitate the attendance of Pacific Island NGO representatives from Fiji, Tuvalu and Vanuatu at this meeting. Thanks to the generosity of the Sponsorship Programme, representatives from Palau and Papua New Guinea are also here. We hope that delegations will join with us in sharing the Ottawa Convention message with these Pacific Island delegates to help them take it back to raise awareness in their communities and the Pacific region more widely.

We wish to acknowledge the work carried out by the New Zealand Campaign Against Landmines (CALM). CALM continues actively to pursue full universalisation and implementation with particular emphasis on the Pacific region. These efforts are widely appreciated. While New Zealand's focus is naturally on the Pacific region we remain committed to the ultimate goal of global adherence.

Our ultimate goal is to rid the world of anti-personnel mines but regrettably many are still being produced and used. New Zealand has continued its work in the mine clearance area in the past year through contributions of funding and expertise including in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Iraq, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mozambique and Sri Lanka. An important element of our contribution has been to focus on capacity building within the affected community where possible. Capacity building assists a country inflicted by conflict in the crucial process of re-building and re-gaining ownership of its future.

We are hoping that this meeting will lay a solid foundation for next year's Review Conference. The Review Conference will provide the opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved in the first five years of the Ottawa Convention. There have been many successes through increasing universalisation, stockpile destruction, mobilisation of resources, assistance to victims and most importantly the establishment of an international norm against the use of anti-personnel mines. States parties can take considerable satisfaction from what has been achieved.

There remains, however, much to be done. New Zealand is committed to working on issues on which States Parties can reach a common understanding at next year's Review Conference and thus strengthen the Convention's norms and objectives. For example during this year's intersessional meetings we expressed concern about States Parties that retain stockpiles of antipersonnel mines for the purposes of training when it is not necessary to do so as simulator mines are available. To achieve a comprehensive regime against the use of anti-personnel mines such issues need to be addressed.

The unprecedented success of the Ottawa Convention is an example of how an inclusive multilateral approach can achieve tangible and sustainable benefits. The important partnership between States Parties, Inter-governmental Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations and the informal, cooperative spirit that has been so obviously apparent at the well-attended intersessionals have contributed to this outstanding success.

Mr President,

The Ottawa Convention has achieved much, but we cannot afford to become complacent. There is a great deal of work still to be done. We trust that under your skilful leadership this meeting will succeed in furthering the vital work of the Convention, which in this multilateral setting has already produced significant benefits for everyday people, everywhere.

Thank you.