

**REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
AND COOPERATION**

**Statement**

**By**

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Bangkok, September 2003

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(Check against delivery)

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Permit me on behalf of the Rwandan Delegation to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as President of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties of the Mine Ban Treaty. It is an election well deserved as manifested by the conduct of the conference so far.

Mr. President,

I also congratulate your colleagues on the coordinating Committee, the Implementation Support Unit and the Secretariat, as well as the Government of Thailand for the tireless efforts that have gone through into preparing this meeting.

I would like to wish all of you great success in the accomplishment of your duties. Be rest assured of our support and cooperation in your efforts to steer us forward in this central and important task.

Mr. President,

Since the establishment of the Ottawa Convention, the problem of the Anti-Personnel Mines and its devastating effects were addressed and significant progress has been made. Rwanda strongly believes that the Mine Ban Treaty has irreversibly established itself as the International norm in banning Anti-Personnel Mines. Over a period of eight years since the establishment of the Rwanda Demining office, a considerable amount of land was cleared of Mines.

Mr. President,

We are also encouraged by the steady increase in the membership to the Convention. I am confident that Universalisation of this convention will be possible with the continuous efforts by Governments, The United Nations Agencies and the NGO's. However Universalisation will remain the greatest challenge as long as powerful Nations, Manufacturers, Producers and Exporters of these Mines are not with us.

Mr. President,

Universalisation of the convention should remain a priority. It is important that initiatives aimed at furthering the Universalisation of this Convention be coordinated in a structured manner involving all the concerned. It is also important that we act in Solidarity and categorically reject attempts that may be made in legitimizing the use of Anti-Personnel Mines.

Mr. President,

The government of Rwanda takes this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to the total eradication of Anti-Personnel Mines. We also reiterate our dedication to the implementation of the Convention.

We recognize the substantial progress made during the Inter-Sessional work programs, all the Standing Committees of experts have proven to be a useful platform in providing a dialogue on all aspects of the treaty implementation. In our view, the standing committees have helped to maintain the momentum to the convention's goals. Working closely together with other International Organizations, both Governmental and Non Governmental Organizations must remain the central approach in combating the scourge of this weapon.

Rwanda takes this opportunity to commend the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) the International Campaign to Ban Land Mines (ICBL), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UNICEF, and other relevant Organizations for their overall consolidation of the Convention.

Let us continue our partnership and put all our strength into effective programs that will shape a meaningful response to the mine victims around the world. Let us look forward for the day when we can walk without fear in a mine free world. This will need the cooperation of all the stakeholders including the Non State Actors (NSAs).

Mr. President Ladies and Gentlemen,

I cannot conclude this remark without mentioning about the Geneva Call which has worked hard to bring forward the Non State Actors. The cross border proliferation small arms and light weapons including anti-personnel mines through non state actors remains the biggest problem for many countries. The solution therefore lies in the working together by harmonizing our concerted efforts. The manufacturers of anti-personnel mines should be called upon to account for their actions or face sanctions from their lack of accountability. It should be strictly forbidden to sell anti-personnel mines to the Non-State Actors and nations that provide related assistance to those groups should be penalized.

One major ray of hope is the National political will to deal with the problem both at the national and international levels.

I thank you Mr. President.