

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

BANGKOK
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Mr. President,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Thailand for taking the challenge of hosting this important meeting and for the excellent preparations. My delegation was warmly received on arrival at the airport. For this I am most grateful.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate your Excellency for your election as President of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties, Mr. President I do not want to fail in my duties to thank the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) for facilitating my country' s participation in this meeting.

Mr. President,

It is the desire of my country to see the continuation of the current organizational arrangement for implementing the Ottawa Convention. The Intercessional Programme established at the First Meeting of States Parties in Maputo in 1999 is a very essential instrument in monitoring and implementing the Convention. The Implementation Support Unit has enhanced proper preparations for Convention meetings.

Mr. President,

I am happy to inform this meeting that my country will soon be passing legislation which will make it an offence for any person in Zambia to violate the provisions of the Convention. The legislation calls for long prison sentences for those who will choose to violate the Convention on the Zambian soil.

I am also pleased to inform the meeting that the Zambia Mine Action Center is carrying out a National Mines Impact Survey. The Survey is planned to be completed by the end of 2003.

On destruction of those Anti-Personnel Mine Stocks which Zambia decided to keep for training purposes, I am happy to announce that arrangements are already underway to destroy a significant amount of those stocks. Details on destruction of these stocks will be included in our article 7 update report.

Mr. President,

Anti-Personnel mines have posed the most serious man made humanitarian problems of our time. Their long term impact upon individuals, communities and societies is unimaginable, especially in conflict prone parts of the third world. It is for this reason that my country supports strong international response to the humanitarian problem caused by the proliferation of anti-personnel mines. I am happy to note that even those countries that are not party to this Convention have joined the struggle against the scourge of these devices. I urge them not to remain on the periphery but join the Convention.

I would like to end by congratulating Kenya for offering to host the First Review Conference of the Convention.

I confirm that my country will be in Nairobi in December, 2004

I THANK YOU