

Statement – by
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Before
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Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti – Personnel Mines and their
Destruction
15th – 19th September 2003
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Mr President,

May I, and on behalf of the Sudan delegation extend to you and to the Bureau, our sincere congratulations for presiding over the work of this conference . We are confident that you will steer it to its desired conclusion. On our part, we will extend to you our full support. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Thailand for hosting this Conference, and for affording us their great hospitality.

Mr, President,

It is heartening to observe the level of support and enthusiasm ,the world is increasingly giving to the question of the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and on their destruction. This model partnership, is increasingly solidifying between governments, active-inter governmental organizations and indeed the civil society, is a welcome sign for a hope that, one day humanity would win over narrow self-interests.

Most reports , including those on the general status and operation of the convention ,and the 2003 Landmine Monitor Report, testify to the dramatic fall on the global use of antipersonnel mines. But again, all have been warned against complacency, and for the need for qualification commitment, still, the Land mines Monitor report reminds us, that forty seven countries, with a combined stockpile of some 200 million antipersonnel mines., remain outside of the Mine Ban Treaty .A great challenge hence, awaits us to achieve universality for the Convention

Mr. President

On this note I would like to reiterate the full commitment , of the Government and the whole people of the Sudan, and its active civil society ,to the objectives of the Ottawa convention. As early signatories, since 1997 ,we have abided by its rules in spirit, in spite of being in a situation of a prolonged internal armed conflict. While our efforts are combined to find a peaceful solution to the conflict, which we are very optimistic will have fruits soon through the marathon talks underway currently in Kenya under the auspices of IGAD,we have formed a unique partnership involving the GOS the SPLM and the international Community on a Joint endeavor to rid the country of the scourge of antipersonnel landmines .This experience has helped in the alleviation of the suffering of the civil population in the affected areas , especially in one of current areas of operations, The Nuba Mountains, and has also clearly contributed to confidence building between the adversaries and helped to speed the process of and to maintain the cease-fire agreement reached between the adversaries in the Nuba Mountains peace agreement .We feel that we could offer this positive experience to the benefit of those facing the same situation.

Mr President,

Sudan remains among the most severely affected countries by mines . The long conflict has resulted in the planting, mostly indiscriminately of a high quantity of landmines , estimated between 500000 to 2 millions , mostly in arable lands and in areas that are vital for the living of the civil population. Almost 70 thousand, the overwhelming majority being civilians, were directly

Mr. President

We commend the partnership and efforts carried out by the active participation of the international community, the UN (UNMAS , UNHCR UNICEF.....) , the ICRC, International NGO's and The Governments of Japan, Sweden, USA, UK, Germany , Switzerland, Italy, Canada the EU and others who have been forthcoming in their assistance for the effort, Our partners, are in agreement with us that the remaining task is of huge magnitude and requires a focused joint effort to draw a comprehensive project ,and to carry it out.

Regionally, we believe that Africa ,which is highly infested with landmines, should be helped . We shall work with our fellow African Countries to develop an all Africa platform on Landmines action.

Nationally, we have established a unique and positive partnership between The Government, Civil Society (Sudan Campaign to Ban landmines) and the UN which has participated in the establishment of the Sudan mine action center.

The Center is active in the fields of advocacy, awareness raising (Mine Risk Education) victim assistance, , research and data collection and support for peace building initiatives related to mine action. A milestone achievement was the unique Memorandum of Understanding signed in Geneva in Sept 2002 between the GOS, the SPLM and the UN office on the joint program on landmines , and its subsequent implementation including cross- line joint training and mine action activities.

Mr. President,

Our national policy priorities in the area of antipersonnel landmine can be summarized in the following

1. The GOS is committed not to manufacture or use antipersonnel Landmines, and has remained in compliance with The Ottawa Conventions since it became a signatory in 1997
2. Creation of database, and to insure that national laws are in conformity with the Convention
3. Empower national government institutions to build a constructive partnership with civil society and the international community.

Mr President,

I would like to assure the Conference that we have completed the legislative requirements regarding the council of Ministers who has already approved the ratification by The GOS of the Ottawa Convention which is finally deposited for the parliament for final approval . We are coming with strong position to work with our partners in the international community on the eradication of landmines, so as to save coming generation and to alleviate the suffering and misery that landmine unnecessarily afflict

Thank you