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Fifth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of
the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines
and on Their Destruction

S t a t e m e n t

By

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Mr President,
Distinguished representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

and wish him and members
of the Bureau success in
discharging their duties.

join others in,

At the outset let me congratulate H.E. Dr Surakiart Sathirathai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand on his election as a President of this meeting. I would, also, like to express the appreciation of Serbia and Montenegro to the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand for hosting this important meeting and for its kind hospitality.

Mr President

The problem of anti-personal landmines presents one of major threats to human security. The indiscriminate character of anti-personal mines brings immeasurable sufferings to the civilian population. Serbia and Montenegro believes that this problem can be successfully addressed only through encouraging all states to accede to the Mine Ban Treaty as well as by devising effective and comprehensive projects and programmes concerning mine risk education, mine clearance, victims assistance and stockpile destruction.

The 2004 First Review Conference will be an important benchmark for the functioning of Mine Ban Treaty. It will be an opportunity to determine what has been done so far and what lies ahead in order to complete mine clearance by 2009. To achieve this it is vital to further promote and strengthen partnership programmes between donor and recipient countries. Indispensable part of this process are the activities of NGO's and civil society as a whole.

Mr President,

On 20 June 2003, the Parliament of Serbia and Montenegro passed the Law on Ratification of the Mine Ban Treaty, better known as the Ottawa Convention. The ratification instruments will be deposited with the Secretary General of the United Nations as soon as the necessary procedure in accordance with the domestic legislature is accomplished. It is our hope that this will occur during the 58th regular session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

By passing this act Serbia and Montenegro has made a final step on the way to its full integration into the international family of Member States of this important instrument in the field of disarmament. This has been yet another transparent proof of a firm commitment of Serbia and Montenegro to fully respect the international standards in the field of disarmament as well as to participate actively in their implementation. Even more, by doing this, Serbia and Montenegro has not only confirmed its unambiguous commitment to the existing international humanitarian legal instruments but its full support to their universality as well.

Mr President

I have the pleasure to inform that Serbia and Montenegro, although not yet a Party to the Convention but soon to be, has followed its noble humanitarian aims and de facto respected the Convention throughout the period that preceded to the formal accession to the Ottawa Convention:

- Since 1992 my country has not been producing nor transferring the anti-personal mines
- De-mining of the border areas with the neighboring countries has almost been finalized. However, the most mine affected area in the vicinity of Jamena village on the border of Serbia and Montenegro with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia still has to be cleared of mines.
- In accordance with the military technical agreement with NATO, complete technical documentation of the minefields in the Autonomous

- Province of Kosovo and Metohija was handed over to KFOR and UNMIK, as the responsible international authorities in the Province
- Special training courses in de-mining as well as in mine victim assistance are being held
 - In spite of expressed readiness to have a part of our Anti personal mine stockpiles destroyed ever before accession to the Convention, due to lack of financial resources this project could not be realized and remains to be incorporated into the stockpile destruction process.
 - The preparations for the stockpile destruction, as one of the main obligations stemming from the Convention, have already been underway. To that end Serbia and Montenegro has established good cooperation with Canada.
 - Counting on substantial international assistance and support for stockpile destruction of just over 1,3 million anti-personal mines and clearance of about 39 million square meters of territory contaminated with mines and unexploded ordnance , it is our hope that by joining the Convention, Serbia and Montenegro will be able to fulfill all its obligations within the given timeframe and thus contribute to international efforts to free South East Europe of anti-personal mines as soon as possible.

Mr President

In closing, I wish to stress the expectation of Serbia and Montenegro that, striving towards the same noble aim, the support of States Parties to the Convention towards my country would not lack.