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Draft Closing Remarks
of His Excellency Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand,
President of the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties, -
to be delivered by His Excellency Dr. Sorajak Kasemsuvan,
Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Friday 19 September 2003, Bangkok, Thailand

**Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Over the past five days, we have worked closely together in a spirit of cooperation and friendship. We have exchanged views and experiences, we have shared aspirations and inspirations. We have been challenged and inspired by the presence and the voices of policy makers, representatives of United Nations agencies, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations, and particularly mine victims and mine survivors themselves.

We have also greatly benefited from the information shared by mine affected States about their problems, their national plans, the progress that they have made and their priorities for assistance. While appreciating the contribution already made to assist mine-affected States, we recognize that the challenges ahead are simply beyond the abilities of mine-affected States alone. We, therefore, reaffirmed our commitments to assist the mine-affected States in their efforts to eradicate landmines within the 10-year timeframe.

Dear Colleagues,

The meeting has also highlighted the plight of mine victims and mine survivors. We have stressed the urgent need to increase resource mobilization for mine action, including particularly for victim assistance. We have reiterated the fact that mine action is not only a humanitarian, but a development issue. To be effective, mine action needs to take a comprehensive and cross-sectoral approach. It needs to be addressed within the context of national social and economic development.

Most important, dear colleagues, is the fact that we must take a more aggressive approach in addressing the risk of landmines and their threat to human security. The devastating effects of landmines have reached and touched people in almost every corner of the world. However much we have accomplished with regard to the Convention's universalization, we can simply not afford to be complacent. In the period leading up to the First Review Conference in Nairobi next year, we must work harder. We must be responsive. We must be pro-active. We must be innovative. And, most important of all, we must work together.

Distinguished Delegates,

In the year ahead, Thailand will work actively and closely with States Parties, the ICBL and the ICRC. We will also encourage greater involvement of States not party to the Convention. As outlined in the President's Action Programme, Thailand intends to ensure that progress in implementing the core humanitarian objectives of the Convention be achieved. To attain this goal, we do count on your cooperation and support.

On behalf of the Government and people of Thailand, I wish to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Jean Lint once again for his long-time dedication for the cause of landmines. As many of you know, Ambassador Lint will complete his term in Geneva and has been asked to undertake another challenging task. We wish him a success in his new undertaking.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express appreciation to the eight Vice-Presidents, namely Austria, Belgium, Colombia, France, Kenya, Peru, Romania, Switzerland, and the Friends of the Chair, Belgium, Malaysia and New Zealand for their active support to the President. We also look forward to working closely with the incoming Co-Chairs, namely, Cambodia, Japan,

Australia, Croatia, Guatemala, Italy, Mexico, and Netherlands, and the incoming Co-Rapporteurs, namely, Algeria, Sweden, Nicaragua, Norway, Bangladesh, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa.

On behalf of the participants of the meeting, I take this opportunity to also thank the GICHD, the ESCAP staff, the United Nations Conference Service, the staff of the UNDDA and all relevant United Nations agencies and international organizations for their roles during this meeting. I thank the interpreters for their excellent service and for their indulgence with us. And I thank you, Mr. Executive Secretary, for your valuable support.

Last but not least, I wish to also place on record my thanks to the ICRC, the members of the ICBL and other members of the civil society for their active participation and valuable contribution.

My profound appreciation also goes to Kerry Brinkert, Manager of the Implementation Support Unit, for serving with tireless dedication and patience, as Executive Coordinator of the President.

Distinguished Delegates,

From now on until the First Review Conference, it is a critical time in the life of the Convention. We must work closely together in the spirit of friendship and partnership.

Let this partnership serve as a "lighthouse" as Professor Daniel Thurer of the ICRC put it.

Let each of us be "emotional" and "inspired" as Ms. Jody Williams has passionately put it.

Let us take this common struggle as our personal commitment.

Together, let us create the world free of mines where everyone, including mine victims, can live their lives with dignity and free from want and fear.

On this note, I declare the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties closed.