



Statement by the Brazilian  
Delegation at VI Meeting of the States  
Parties to the Ottawa Convention

28 November 2005

Madam President, at the outset, the Brazilian Delegation wants to express its appreciation to the Croatian Government for kindly hosting this important meeting and also to thank the citizens of Zagreb for their warm hospitality.

The Convention against Antipersonnel Mines is a unique international instrument that allows us, taking into account different perspectives and realities, to deal with a complex issue.

Its objective is to completely ban a category of weapons, whose military utility is largely outweighed by its cruel and indiscriminate impact on civilians. The Convention, since its entry into force, has already attained remarkable results in its two main areas: disarmament and humanitarian assistance. Such positive outcomes can only be explained by the existence of a powerful political will, stimulated by organized civil society, as well as by the development of important and effective mechanisms of cooperation and assistance.

Much has been done, but there is still a long way to go. The 147 Members of the Convention have to look towards the future and renew their efforts and commitments in order to better face the challenges ahead. The Nairobi Action Plan is our guide in this effort and must be pursued in all its aspects, without specific privileges to one or another item. The Zagreb Progress Report, in this sense, must be a useful tool to put into practice the compromise that we have taken in our last Review Conference.

The achievements reached up to this moment should not be used as an excuse for inaction. On the contrary, they must be seen as a minimum standard that we have to surpass. All States-Parties, from those who donate financial resources and technical expertise to those which have the primary responsibility for demining and assist victims, must renew and enhance their efforts in order to turn 2009 into a landmark of accomplishment, as envisaged in Nairobi.

Brazil understands, as was mentioned yesterday at the opening ceremony, that universalization - taking into account its qualitative and quantitative aspects - remains our primary objective. It is of utmost importance, if we want to remain credible to ourselves and to the international community that the main producers and possessors of antipersonnel landmines adhere to the Convention.

We acknowledge with satisfaction that many among them already abide by its fundamental principles, by means of voluntary and unilateral moratoria of antipersonnel landmine production, transfer or use. Nevertheless, such initiatives do not provide sufficient assurances to the international community, which would be guaranteed through legally binding commitments.

We commend Ethiopia, Buthan, Latvia and Vanuatu for acceding to the Convention. At the same time, we urge those States not yet parties to the Mine-Ban Treaty to adhere to it, so that they can fully integrate themselves to our efforts.

Since the Ottawa Convention entered into force for Brazil, in 1999, our country has given permanent proof of its unequivocal commitment to this instrument. We completed the destruction of our antipersonnel landmine stockpile in January 2003, much in advance of the permitted time schedule. We adopted Federal Act number 10300, which establishes penal sanctions for acts that violate the prohibitions of the Convention. Brazil shares a border of more than 8.000 kilometers with 10 countries and has never felt the need to resort to landmines. As a result, there are no contaminated areas by landmines of any kind, within or next to our borders.

Brazil attributes special relevance to cooperation and assistance under the aegis of article 6 of the Convention, which for us is one of its fundamental pillars. Brazil is a major contributor to OAS' humanitarian demining missions in

Central America, Ecuador and Peru. Our next mission will be in Colombia, following an invitation by OAS. The experience acquired in the course of such missions, as well as the high training standards of Brazilian military officers and personnel, enables us to extend and to enhance our cooperation with affected countries.

In the light of what is described in Action 50 of the Nairobi Action Plan, Brazil is assessing ways and means of engaging its efforts in the area of victim assistance, by providing physical rehabilitation and medical services. We have highly qualified human and material resources that could be useful towards that aim. We just need to find new and creative financial mechanisms that allow for a better combination of different national capabilities of States-Parties, so as to help affected countries to attain the goals established by the Convention and to free their peoples from the pain and fear imposed by antipersonnel landmines. We hope that this meeting could serve for that purpose.

Madam President, to conclude, we hope, in the same spirit of the words expressed yesterday by the Nobel Laureate, Ms. Jody Williams, that the Mine Ban Treaty continues to be "an example and inspiration for addressing other humanitarian, development and disarmament challenges", as stated in the Nairobi Declaration. We also hope that the same enthusiasm and activism demonstrated by international civil society regarding mines could be directed to ban other cruel and inhumane weapons with indiscriminate and persistent effects, especially nuclear weapons. Thank you.