



STATEMENT

BY

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GENEVA**

AT

**THE SIXTH 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**

ZAGREB: 28 NOVEMBER 2005

Madam President,

Allow me to felicitate you on assumption of the presidency of the Sixth 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. It is my privilege to be here to observe the proceedings of this Annual Meeting. I also extend our warmest greetings to the Government and people of Croatia with whom we enjoy very cordial relations.

A mine-free world is our shared vision. India's landmine philosophy is inspired by humanitarianism and guided by respect for International Humanitarian Law and protection of civilian life from the gravest threats posed by irresponsible use of mines and improvised explosive devices. India remains fully committed to the ultimate objective of a universal ban on anti-personnel landmines in a manner that would also address the legitimate national security concerns of States. We also believe that availability of appropriate militarily-effective, non-lethal and cost-effective alternative technologies will greatly facilitate in attaining that goal.

India is conscious of humanitarian risks resulting from indiscriminate use and transfer of anti-personnel mines. Therefore, we support the humanitarian objectives of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Our participation at the Nairobi Review Conference last year and subsequent inter-sessional Meetings, including this Meeting, is a reflection of our commitment to the common vision of a world free of the threat of landmines and unexploded ordinance. At the same time, we recognize the limitations of this Convention in not addressing national security concerns of States with long land borders wherein minefields at frontiers will continue to form an important component of defensive layout. While our security requirements necessitate the use of anti-personnel mines, this is done in accordance with internationally acknowledged security norms and safety parameters.

Our strong adherence to International Humanitarian Law is reflected in long held commitment to and active participation in the CCW process. India is amongst those States Parties which have

ratified the CCW Convention, its Amended Article 1, and all annexed Protocols, including the latest Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War. India has also assumed leadership roles in the CCW process by presiding annual Meetings of States Parties in 2002 and 2003. It has led the Working Group on Explosive Remnants of War for last two years. India continues to play a constructive role in the ongoing discussions towards an instrument on Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines. A future instrument on MOTAPM will supplement the existing instruments on anti-personnel mines in addressing humanitarian challenges in a more comprehensive manner. From this perspective, the CCW framework is indeed a dynamic process.

The Amended Protocol II to the CCW Convention is the most comprehensive legally binding instrument that addresses the humanitarian concerns posed by the indiscriminate use of all types of mines and other explosive devices, while permitting States to use these mines in a regulated fashion for legitimate defensive purposes. As required by the Amended Protocol II, design and development of detectable anti-personnel mines has been completed by India. Moreover, India has not produced non-detectable mines since January 1997. India also observes a formal moratorium on export of landmines and favours an outright ban on transfer of mines even to States Parties to the Amended Protocol II. The production, trade and use of landmines are vested solely with agencies of the Union Government. Dissemination of information to the armed forces and enhancement of public awareness on anti-personnel landmines is an important part of my government's policy.

Our landmine doctrine authorizes the use of landmines exclusively by military formations. They have well established Standard Operating Procedures whereby minefields are laid, if required, along the border areas as part of military operations. These minefields are properly marked and fenced to prevent casualties to innocent civilians or grazing cattle. There is no minefield or mined area in any part of India's interiors. India has never resorted to the use of mines for maintenance of internal order or in counter-terrorism operations, notwithstanding the gravest security

challenges posed by non-State actors who use improvised explosive devices indiscriminately against civilian targets.

Over the years, the Indian army has acquired considerable expertise in de-mining operations. The national expertise of our army has been extensively applied in UN-sponsored mine clearance programmes in several peacekeeping operations that India has participated in, including those in Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Somalia. India's role in providing de-mining equipment, instructional staff, establishment of control set up and de-mining of areas occupied by Indian contingents have been recognized in various UN peacekeeping missions.

India remains committed to mine-related international cooperation and assistance under the UN umbrella or within the CCW framework. We are in favour of strengthened cooperation in mine clearance, including unrestricted transfer of mine clearance technology, equipment and training; risk education; rehabilitation; victim assistance and socio-economic upliftment of mine-affected communities. India's contribution in humanitarian de-mining and rehabilitation, especially in the field of prosthetics has been well acknowledged. Our experts have distributed in mine affected countries of Africa and South Asia, especially Afghanistan, an efficient and cost-effective artificial limb, popularly known as the 'Jaipur Foot'. Since January 2002, India has held several artificial limb fitment camps in many parts of Afghanistan for the rehabilitation of mine victims.

Madam President,

To conclude, I would like to reaffirm my country's endorsement of the humanitarian agenda of the Ottawa Convention and our strong commitment to international efforts towards regulation of irresponsible use of mines and other explosive devices in order to secure a mine-safe world.

I thank you for your attention.