

STATEMENT BY THE ZAMBIAN DELEGATION TO THE 8TH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES HELD FROM 18th – 22nd NOVEMBER 2007 AT THE DEAD SEA, JORDAN

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, PRESIDENT OF THE 8TH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES,

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES

I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY, JUST LIKE THE OTHERS WHO HAVE SPOKEN BEFORE ME TO CONGRATULATE YOU, YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, ON YOUR BEING ELECTED AS PRESIDENT OF THIS MEETING. ON BEHALF OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA, I WOULD FURTHER LIKE TO CONGRATULATE ALL THE OTHER OFFICE BEARERS ON THEIR ELECTION.

ZAMBIA, WOULD ALSO LIKE TO CONVEY OUR HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS TO INDONESIA, KUWAIT, IRAQ AND NOW PALAU WHO ARE THE LATEST STATES TO ACCEDE TO THE CONVENTION. AS A COUNTRY WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY THIS DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUE TO URGE STATES THAT HAVE NOT ACCEDED OR RATIFIED THE CONVENTION TO TAKE THIS IMPORTANT STEP IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE. IN THIS REGARD WE WISH TO EXPRESS OUR STEADFAST SUPPORT FOR COUNTRIES SUCH AS BAHRAIN, LAOS, MONGOLIA AND NEPAL THAT HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR INTENTION TO ACCEDE TO THE CONVENTION IN THE NEAR FUTURE. FURTHERMORE, IT IS OUR RESOLVE

TO CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE THAT ARMED NON – STATE ACTORS EQUALLY ADHERE TO THE CONVENTION’S NORMS TO SPARE CIVILIANS OF THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF ANTI PERSONNEL MINES AND MORE RECENTLY OF CLUSTER MUNITIONS.

ZAMBIA WOULD LIKE TO REAFFIRM THAT ITS DEMINING PROGRAMME REMAINS COMMITTED TO FULFILLING ITS ARTICLE 5 OBLIGATIONS AND HAS RECENTLY RECEIVED A SIGNIFICANT BOOST OF FUNDS FROM THE GOVERNMENTS OF CANADA, SWEDEN AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC. ZAMBIA WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND ITS SINCERE GRATITUDE TO THESE OUR VALUED PARTNERS AND IS TRULY GRATEFUL FOR THIS TIMELY ASSISTANCE WHICH WILL BE CRUCIAL IN ENSURING THAT THE COUNTRY IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONVENTION.

THESE FUNDS AMOUNTING TO APPROXIMATELY SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND U.S. DOLLARS (\$700,000) WILL ENABLE THE LONG OVERDUE NATIONWIDE SURVEY OF SUSPECTED CONTAMINATED AREAS TO BE CONDUCTED. THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY WHICH ARE EXPECTED TO BE READY BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING OF STATES PARTIES, WILL ENABLE THE COUNTRY TO APPROPRIATELY PRIORITISE MINE ACTION PROGRAMMES. WE CONTINUE TO REMAIN CONFIDENT THAT WE SHALL BE ABLE TO DECLARE ZAMBIA AS ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANT BEFORE OUR DEADLINE OF AUGUST 2011.

THESE FUNDS HAVE ALSO ENABLED THE MINE ACTION PROGRAMME TO CONDUCT A CRUCIAL NATIONWIDE DATA COLLECTION SURVEY ON MINE AND ERW VICTIMS AND THEIR REQUIREMENTS. THE RESULTS OF THIS SURVEY WILL ALLOW FOR COMPREHENSIVE AND APPROPRIATE VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME TO BE DEVELOPED. IN ADDITION, MINE RISK EDUCATION PROGRAMMES TARGETTING BOTH LOCAL AND REPATRIATING REFUGEE COMMUNITIES HAVE ALSO BENEFITTED FROM THESE FUNDS.

WHILE ZAMBIA HAS NEVER EXPERIENCED ARMED CONFLICT, THE THREAT OF MINE AND ERW CONTAMINATION EXISTS AND REMAINS A MAJOR BLOCKAGE TO THE COUNTRY'S EFFORTS IN MEETING THE MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS. CONTAMINATION MEANS THAT ANY DEVELOPMENTAL ACHIEVEMENTS MADE WILL BE LOPSIDED ACROSS THE NATION WITH THE COMMUNITIES THAT NEED THIS DEVELOPMENT THE MOST BEING LEFT BEHIND AS IS THE CASE ALREADY.

INHABITANTS CONTINUE TO EXPERIENCE THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF MINES PARTICULARLY ERW WHICH ARE THE MAIN CONTAMINANTS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. THEY CONTINUE TO BE DENIED ACCESS TO SAFE AGRICULTURAL LAND, GOOD TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AS A RESULT OF THIS CONTAMINATION.

SINCE THE 7TH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES THERE HAS BEEN AT LEAST 1 CASE OF INJURIES CAUSED BY UXOS THAT HAS BEEN REPORTED. THIS INCIDENT WAS IN AN AREA PREVIOUSLY NOT SUSPECTED AS CONTAMINATED. THE INJURED WOMAN HAD BEEN TRYING TO DEVELOP A NEWLY ACQUIRED PIECE OF LAND FOR RESIDENTIAL USE AND SMALL SCALE FARMING. SUCH INCIDENTS RESULT IN COMMUNITIES SHYING AWAY FROM ACTIVITIES THAT WOULD IMPROVE THEIR LIVELIHOOD. THE NEED FOR MINE RISK EDUCATION SPECIFICALLY TARGETING LOCAL COMMUNITIES REMAINS A PRIORITY. IN THIS REGARD, WORK IS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY TO INCLUDE MRE INTO THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN SUSPECTED CONTAMINATED AREAS.

IN CONCLUSION, MR. PRESIDENT, ZAMBIA REMAINS POSITIVE THAT AFTER TEN (10) CHALLENGING YEARS OF BEING A REALITY, THE CONVENTION IS INDEED A SUCCESS IN PROGRESS AND WE WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE TO EMPHASISE THAT THE EFFORTS TOWARDS A MINE FREE WORLD SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE A CONCERTED ONE BY ALL HUMANITY. THERE STILL REMAINS A NEED FOR THOSE STATES SUCH AS ZAMBIA, REQUIRING ASSISTANCE IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ARTICLE 5 OBLIGATIONS TO CONTINUE TO BE GIVEN THE FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUIRED TO CONSOLIDATE THE CONVENTION AS A MAJOR VICTORY AGAINST INDISCRIMINATE WEAPONS.

I THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT.