

**CANADA - GENERAL STATEMENT**  
**9<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF STATES PARTIES**  
**Geneva, Switzerland, November 24-28, 2008**

Thank You Mr. President

My delegation would like to congratulate you on your election as President of our mine action family. This year is perhaps the most difficult year we have faced since 1997. We will need to address the first and largest group of extension requests permitted under Article 5. We also need to meet the challenges of States Parties not meeting their obligation to destroy their stockpiles, among perhaps other compliance issues. Also much work lies ahead of us to prepare for the Second Review Conference. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you personally, and Switzerland, for the courage you have shown us in taking on the responsibility of leading us through these difficult issues. Canada stands ready to assist you in your task in any way you deem fitting.

Mr. President, the Ottawa Convention entered into force ten years ago next March. Almost ten years later we are coming to the time that the first group of States Parties are, or perhaps were, obligated to meet their Article 5 obligations to destroy all mines in all mined areas. Fifteen States Parties have requested extensions, many of them have done some good work over the past 10 years and we have always known that the most mine affected states would not be able to clear their mines in the 10 year period – in fact that is why the drafters of the Convention imbedded the ability to request and grant extensions. Other State Parties have not been as successful. But what most of them have done is to provide their partners in our endeavor, the other States Parties and the NGO community, with absolute clarity as to their current situation and what remains to be done. Many have provided us with a solid plan to get there.

Of course it is essential that we look forward and not backward. Having said that, not all of the extension requests provide the clarity or the plan mandated at the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of State Parties. Mr. President what we do this week will set a precedent, our decisions will be vital to ensuring the integrity of this Convention. Our informal discussion tomorrow promises to be at least spirited, and later perhaps we should exercise our responsibility to vote on all of the extension requests. This Convention was after all, founded on the failure of a consensus based forum to, in any meaningful way; adequately address the humanitarian impact of anti personnel mines. Consensus by all means, but not at any cost, should be our objective. Let us not forget that – let us not forget why we are here, - let us not forget that the lives of countless victims have been torn asunder by these horrible weapons.

Mr. President stockpile destruction was one of the great success stories of this Convention; or at least it was until this year when three States Parties failed to achieve their obligation to destroy all stockpiled mines as soon as possible but not later than four years after entry into force. One of those three States Parties reported to all of us last year that it would not be able to meet its Article 4 obligation because the type of mine, the PFM mine, recognized in the Nairobi Action Plan, is particularly difficult to destroy, and that it was in the process of acquiring the necessary resources to deal with the problem. Others have not been as transparent and Canada, as do many who have managed to achieve this obligation despite trying circumstances, expects that clarity to be provided – we must learn from these experiences to prevent future episodes regarding Article 4. Certainly the States Parties involved should inform us, on an urgent basis, of what they will do to meet the obligation they voluntarily accepted. Thank you Mr. President et bonne chance.