



## STATEMENT

by H.E. Ambassador Hannu HIMANEN

Head of the Finnish Delegation  
at the Ninth 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  
(9MSP)

Geneva, 24 November 2008

## Statement by Finland

Mr. President,

Let me start by congratulating you on your assumption of the chair. You can rely on my delegation's cooperation and support. At the outset, Finland wishes to fully associate itself with the statement made by France on behalf of the European Union.

Finland participates in this meeting as an observer, as it is not yet party to the Convention, to demonstrate its continued commitment to an effective and global ban on anti-personnel mines. I wish to take this opportunity to confirm Finland's intention to accede to the Ottawa Convention in 2012 and destroy all its stockpiles of anti-personnel mines by 2016. As we have stated earlier, there are no minefields in Finland, and we do not produce or export anti-personnel landmines.

Finland has contributed to the implementation of the Ottawa Convention for several years through humanitarian mine action. Let me briefly outline this activity.

In its humanitarian mine action, Finland has focused on countries with the highest numbers of accidents caused by landmines and explosive remnants of war. At the moment, Finland supports humanitarian mine action in six countries, namely Afghanistan (in cooperation with UNMAS and HALO), Angola (Finnish Church Aid, FRC/ICRC), Cambodia (HALO, Handicap International), Ethiopia (Norwegian People's Aid), Iraq (FRC/ICRC) and Somalia (HALO).

Our efforts are based on a comprehensive approach in which mine detection and clearance, assistance for the care, rehabilitation and social and economic integration of the mine victims as well as support to mine awareness projects complement each other. In addition to bilateral humanitarian mine action through Finnish and international NGOs, Finland also supports the UN Mine Action Service, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining as well as humanitarian landmine activities of the European Union.

Finland considers humanitarian mine action as a part of longer-term rehabilitation and development efforts. Humanitarian mine action plays an important role in early recovery, and it should be integrated into a country's own poverty reduction strategy and development planning as soon as the situation allows it. This is indispensable in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of removing landmines in accordance with the Convention.

Finland's contribution to humanitarian mine action in 2008 amounts to five million euros, and we intend to maintain this level of funding next year. We would wish to emphasize, however, that in the aftermath of numerous emergencies and crises, the challenge of demining is only growing in scale and complexity. It is therefore imperative to mobilise new donors to support humanitarian mine action.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.