

**The General Status of Implementation
Statement by H.E. Mr. Chaiyong Satjipanon,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand
On Behalf of the President of the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties**

9 February 2004

Friends: For almost two years it has been the practice at the beginning of the week of Standing Committees for an address to be delivered by or on behalf of the President on the general status of the implementation of the Convention. It is a great honour for me to deliver such a statement today on behalf of His Excellency, Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and President of the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties.

In keeping with tradition, it is my intention to provide such a statement in the context of progress made in the application of the 5MSP President's Action Programme. It was this document after all which was "warmly welcomed" by the States Parties as "a practical means of focusing on the collective efforts of States Parties and other actors in progress in achieving the Convention's core humanitarian aims in the period leading to the Convention's First Review Conference."

You may recall that in his President's Action Programme, Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai urged:

- All States Parties and relevant organizations to renew their commitments to the implementation of the Convention;
- All mine-affected States Parties to ensure that, by the First Review Conference, plans are in place and concrete steps taken to fully implement the Convention;
- All States Parties, relevant international and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations to engage more actively States not Party to the Convention, including by emphasizing the benefits of joining the Convention; and
- All States not yet Party to the Convention to join us in this common effort, recognizing that the Convention is consistent with and supportive of national social and economic development, human security and multilateralism.

Please allow me to update you on progress since the 5MSP with respect to these issues.

Concerning the pursuit of universal acceptance of the Convention, I am pleased to report to you that the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties served as the catalyst for five additional States to join our common effort. Since the Meeting in Bangkok last September, Serbia and Montenegro, Greece, Turkey, Sudan and Burundi ratified or acceded to the Convention. The number now stands at 141 and we are poised to see Convention membership grow to 150 States by the Review Conference.

Concerning the Convention's aims of clearing mined areas and assisting victims, I am extremely grateful not only for the progress that has been made but also for the efforts taken by mine-affected States Parties to communicate their "4Ps". In Nairobi, we will sit down to review the general status and operation of the Convention. This will be impossible if we ourselves – the mine-affected States which have accepted certain important obligations – do not clearly articulate our own definition of our problems, our plans, our progress to date and our priorities for assistance. The value of the 2003-2004 Intersessional Work Programme rests on the extent to which this mechanism truly will live up to its promise as a forum for a rich exchange of information. I am optimistic that it will as I expect that tomorrow and Wednesday, up to 20 mine-affected States Parties will provide updates.

It is precisely because assistance is needed that the President's Action Programme urged renewals of commitments. Political commitments are necessary. Financial commitments are necessary. And commitments to ensure the proper place of mine action within development strategies – on the part of both donor and recipient States – are necessary.

With respect to commitments, I am pleased that later this morning we will hear from the Asian Development Bank regarding the contribution it can make to our cause. I am grateful that Norway is continuing its efforts to coordinate the Resource Mobilisation Contact Group – to ensure that concrete outcomes emerge on this matter at the Review Conference. And I am honoured that Thailand has been asked to take a leading role in the informal Resource Mobilisation Task Force – to take important messages regarding our Convention to the World Bank by pointing out the linkages between mine clearance and socio-economic development.

Regarding our important obligation to destroy stockpiled anti-personnel mines, I am pleased to report that the good news continues: It is my understanding that as of today, 116 States Parties to the Convention now no longer hold stockpiled

anti-personnel mines. In total, we the States Parties to this Convention have destroyed more than 30,700,000 (thirty-million-seven-hundred-thousand) mines. My hope is that this number will soon exceed 31 million.

On Thursday we will hear about the specific progress made in destroying stockpiled mines. But we will also hear about specific challenges that remain. Some of the newest States Parties have incredible numbers of mines which must be destroyed by early 2008. While we must continue to give due attention to the needs of mine affected communities and landmine survivors, we must not forget that our obligations with regard to assistance and cooperation also apply to helping States Parties in destroying their stockpiles.

Friends: The President's Action Programme noted that "in the pursuit of the implementation of the Convention, each region has unique challenges and capacities" and that "States Parties should therefore take steps to ensure that regional initiatives and activities to raise awareness on the issue of anti-personnel mines be undertaken as a continuous process, leading towards the First Review Conference." I am pleased that since the 5MSP – thanks to Burkina Faso and Romania hosting significant activities in recent weeks, regional workshops focusing on experiences in West Africa and South Eastern Europe have been held. I look forward to hearing updates on these events later this morning.

I am also pleased that prior to the First Review Conference in November, a significant number of events related to the implementation of the Convention will take place in almost every region of the world. On our part, Thailand itself is planning to organize a regional seminar in the second quarter of this year in Bangkok, the focus of which will be mine clearance and development opportunities.

My task this morning is not to tell the whole story but simply to set the scene for the week ahead. I will therefore end by highlighting one final element of the President's Action Programme. That is, the President's Action Programme indicated that "the role of public conscience will remain important in maintaining domestic interest in the landmines issue" and that, to this end, "States Parties should continue to reinforce their strong partnership with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as with other significant actors in our common cause." We continue to be indebted to the commitments of the ICBL, ICRC and others, and I salute the representatives of these organizations – such our good friend here in Geneva, Ms. Susan Walker – for their tireless efforts to help realize the Convention. And I am especially pleased that Jody Williams is with us this

week and wish to extend my personal thanks to her for her dedication and devotion.

Thank you and I wish you the best for a productive week.
