



**United Kingdom
Permanent Representation
to the
Conference on Disarmament**

**INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OF STATES PARTY TO THE
OTTAWA CONVENTION**

STATEMENT ON ARTICLE 5

**H.E. AMBASSADOR JOHN FREEMAN
UK PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE
CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT**

GENEVA, 14 JUNE 2005

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Mr Chairman Designate,

On taking the floor for the first time since the highly successful Review Conference in Nairobi, I wish to reaffirm the United Kingdom's commitment to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, more commonly known as the Ottawa or Mine Ban Treaty. The outcome document of the Review Conference, the 70 point Action Plan, is an important step on the road to a Mine Free World.

The legacy of conflict can be seen in countries where mines still pose a threat to civilian populations. Where there are anti-personnel landmines there is little prospect for development. The UK sees the humanitarian threat of anti-personnel mines as a significant barrier to development. This is why we regard humanitarian demining as a high priority and continue to support this work financially. There are still numerous new victims of landmines each year and although decreasing, is still unacceptable.

Against this background, we are mindful that the UK is bound by the Convention to clear all mined areas, for which we have responsibility, by March 2009. The only territory where mines are present are the Falkland Islands following the conflict in 1982.

Our own studies have shown that there are approximately 100 mined areas on the Falkland Islands which most likely contain both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines. The size of the affected areas vary, most being a few hundred square meters. In accordance with our obligations under this Convention and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, all mined areas are fenced and marked to exclude civilians. Despite the presence of mines on the Falklands for 23 years there has never been a civilian casualty and all islanders, including children, are educated on how to avoid them.

In order to fulfil our obligations under Article 5 of the Convention we have, and continue to, work closely with the Argentinean government in finding a solution. To this end, our two governments have created a Joint Working Party to analyse and decide how best to solve the outstanding problem and take forward the necessary feasibility study. This Party meets regularly, the last meeting of which took place at the end of April in Buenos Aires. The outcome of this meeting has been circulated as a conference paper. A further meeting is scheduled to take place in London in July.

Mr Chairman Designate,

The Ottawa Treaty is a unique instrument that has laid the foundation for a Mine Free World. The recent Review Conference confirmed its importance and outlined its role for the next 5 years. The UK continues to contribute financially to the clearance of mines in mine affected countries where there is a high risk to civilians. We remain committed to the overall aim of the Treaty and will continue to play our part in its success.