

MINE BAN TREATY

STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS, MAY 2002

STATEMENT BY BRAZIL – DISCUSSION ON MINE CLEARANCE COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE

1. Given the gravity and magnitude of the crisis created by anti-personnel landmines, it is the duty of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty to never falter in striving towards the attainment of our common humanitarian goals. Brazil chaired the negotiations of Article 6 of the Treaty, which deals with international cooperation and assistance. Article 6 is an integral part of the international mine action regime. States Parties in need of cooperation have the right, under Article 6, to seek and receive assistance in implementing the Convention. Clearly, given the dire financial situation in which many mine-affected States find themselves, effective implementation of Article 6 is crucial and indispensable to the attainment of the humanitarian goals of the Convention and to the implementation of many of the Convention's provisions, on mine clearance and stockpile destruction, among others.

2. Effective mine action is a collective responsibility of the international community. For our humanitarian goals to be successful, donor countries must consistently live up to their obligations and commitments under Article 6. Since the Mine Ban Treaty's entry into force more than three years ago, notable developments and important advances have taken place in the field of international humanitarian mine action. Consistency of effort is important for the effective implementation of Article 6 and of the other provisions of the Convention. States Parties in a position to do so should, therefore, continue sponsoring established programs in mine-affected States that have demonstrated a strong commitment to the Mine Ban Treaty. Additional funding, however, is also necessary, so that challenges arising out of new mine action frontiers may be properly dealt with.

3. Though Brazil is a developing country, it has done its share in contributing to international mine action. Brazil has participated actively in demining efforts undertaken by the Organization of American States in Central America, by providing significant in-kind assistance to MARMINCA (Mission for Assisting the Removal of Landmines in Central America). The Brazilian Officers participating in MARMINCA have constituted nearly 50% of that Mission's experts. Usually, only States providing financial donations are named. In some cases, in-kind contributions may be particularly important and costly. Brazil remains firmly committed to participating in efforts at international humanitarian demining. The Brazilian experience in this field has also included participation in mine clearance activities in successive UN verification missions (UNAVEM) in Angola.

4. The Brazilian Government is currently exploring new options for cooperating in international humanitarian demining. Arrangements are underway so that Brazil may soon begin participating in demining efforts in Mozambique. It is our intention to send a Military Technical Adviser to Mozambique's successful Accelerated Demining

Programme. It is also our expectation that the international community will continue unfalteringly to support Mozambique's mine action activities. Brazil is also willing to explore different modalities of cooperation with Guinea-Bissau, another mine-affected country to which the international community owes its support and assistance.

5. Our sister nation of Angola is currently going through a crucial phase of its history. The signing of the cease-fire arrangement on April 4th of this year put an end to 27 years of civil war. The international community, including donor countries, must strongly support post-conflict peacebuilding and national reconstruction activities in Angola, including in the field of mine action. Brazil is strongly committed to contributing to the consolidation of peace in Angola and believes the mine action community also has an important role to play in this respect.

6. If international mine action efforts are to be effective, States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty must remain committed to Article 6. Adequate implementation of Article 6 entails both maintaining continued support for already-existing programmes in mine-affected States Parties to the Treaty and the offering of additional assistance and funding for new mine action efforts in different countries. States Parties should reaffirm this understanding.

In-kind assistance, particularly though the provision of specialized experts to affected States, should also be recalled here. Usually, only the contribution of States providing financial donations to humanitarian mine action is mentioned. In-kind assistance is, in some cases, very important and costly. The Brazilian officers that have participated in MARMINCA constitute almost 50% of that Mission's experts. Brazil has already spent about US\$ 4 million with MARMINCA since its beginnings.