

Opening of the 8-12 May 2006 of meetings of the Standing Committees

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Excellencies, colleagues and friends:

On behalf of the President of the Sixth Meeting of the States Parties, Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Croatia, it is my pleasure to open this session of meetings of the Standing Committees.

Last year when he opened these meetings, our good friend Wolfgang Petritsch remarked that after the success of the Nairobi Summit some thought there would be a let-down in enthusiasm.

Looking around in this room at the more than 400 representatives of States and international and non-governmental organizations, it is clear that a high level of commitment remains.

Certainly a tremendous amount of good will remains.

And in Zagreb we heard numerous attestations of this fact.

We heard expressions of will to universalize the Convention, expressions of will to assist survivors, expressions of will to ensure the destruction of stockpiled and emplaced anti-personnel mines, and expressions of will to fulfill our other obligations.

However, let's be clear: Good will alone will not meet expectations.

Good words expressing our will to succeed will not result in an end to the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines.

Rather, effective actions need to follow closely on the heels of the words of will that we utter.

The Intersessional Work Programme presents both a risk and an opportunity:

- The risk is that we'll lapse into self-congratulation, that we'll think of this week as a stand-alone activity soon to be forgotten as we depart on Friday afternoon, and that we'll express good will without backing this up with a plan to act.
- The opportunity rests in viewing this week not as an end in itself but as part of a process – a process of meeting expectations which are clearly defined and which have concrete deadlines, that when necessary we'll be self-critical, and that when we speak we'll outline not only what we will for but also what will do.

I urge you to acknowledge the risk and hence take advantage of the opportunity.

We are in the second of five years of applying the Nairobi Action Plan.

The Nairobi Action Plan in turn is a tool to focus our efforts to fulfill certain legal obligations that we, as sovereign States, have freely accepted.

And we have agreed to fulfill these obligations because we know that people everywhere expect more of States – expecting us to take responsible for important matters of human security.

Friends: It's all about expectations.

And, when it comes to this Convention, expectations are high.

And so let us begin our week of work, ensuring that we are acting – not just talking – to meet these high expectations.

I wish you all the best in your endeavors.