

**Statement of H.E. Dr. Pracha Guna-Kasem,  
Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
and Head of the Delegation of Thailand  
to the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention,  
16 September 2002  
Geneva**

\*

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me at the outset congratulate you, Mr President, upon your election to the Presidency of the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention. My delegation firmly believes that under your able leadership and guidance, this meeting will be both productive and pleasant. I also wish to congratulate Ambassador Christian Faessler for his election as Secretary-General of this meeting. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Switzerland on her becoming the 190<sup>th</sup> member of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Since the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention, much progress has been made to achieve the core objectives and to fulfill the obligation of the Convention. According to the 2002 Landmine Monitor, more than 34 million land mines have been destroyed thus far. The average number of mine victims per year have been reduced from 26,000 to about 15 to 20,000 per year. These figures attest to the effectiveness of the Ottawa Convention in combating landmine problems. However, much work remains to be done since there are still more than 200 million landmines in the arsenals of nearly 100 countries.

During the past few years, the work undertaken under the Convention has been reinforced by the genuine efforts by all States Parties and their partners in a cooperative manner. Extraordinary progress has been made through more effective organization of the inter-sessional activities, and the establishment of the Coordinating Committee presently under the active chairmanship of Nicaragua and the Implementation Support Unit with the effective assistance from the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining under Ambassador Martin Dahinden. These efforts have immensely contributed to the success and the steady advancement of the Convention. The nature of collaboration in itself, which is based upon informality, inclusiveness, a sense of partnership and mutual benefits, is key to the successful progress of the implementation of the Convention.

Mr. President,

Two main challenges are still before us : On the first challenge, the Universalization of the Convention and the fulfillment of the obligations under the Ottawa Convention. On this first challenge it is encouraging to learn that since the Third Meeting of the States Parties, the number

of ratification has gone up to 126. In this regard, Thailand wishes to congratulate and extend a warm welcome to our new members : Nigeria, Algeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Surinam, Angola and Afghanistan. Thailand is strongly committed to the Universalization objective of the Convention. In this connection, the Thai Government hosted a regional meeting entitled “Landmines in Southeast Asia” to promote awareness of the usefulness of the Convention among all Southeast Asian Countries with a view to encouraging them to accede to the Convention. Furthermore, Thailand has joined other like-minded countries such as Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Australia in a concerted diplomatic effort to promote the accession to the Convention by all Asian-Pacific countries.

While Universalization is a very important objective, operationalization of the Convention is equally fundamental. Good intention must be matched with real deed. Full implementation is an obligation for all member states. However, a large number of mine-affected developing countries have experienced difficulties in so doing due to both technical and financial constraints. Consequently the provision of technical cooperation and financial assistance is essential for concrete results on the ground. Thailand, therefore, would like to strongly urge to all donors, international organizations and NGOs to continue and increase their support and assistance for mine-affected developing countries.

Mr. President,

Thailand is committed to fulfill all our obligations under the Convention. Since the Third Meeting of the States Parties in Managua last year, 120,000 stockpiled mines have been destroyed thereby bringing the total number of land mines destroyed thus far to nearly three hundred thousand . Of the remaining 51,480 mines, all will be destroyed before 1<sup>st</sup> May 2003, the deadline set by the Mine Ban Treaty.

Mr. President,

At the Third Meeting of States Parties in Managua last September, the Thai delegation offered to host the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty. On behalf of the Thai Government, I wish to reiterate our offer to host the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties in 2003 in Bangkok. If Thailand were to receive the honour to host this Fifth Meeting of the States Parties, we will do our best to ensure that the Bangkok meeting will effectively advance the goal of the Convention to bring about a mine free world.

Thank-you Mr. President.