

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR B.M. BOWA
TO BE ISSUED AT THE FOURTH MEETING OF STATES
PARTIES TO THE OTTAWA CONVENTION**

September, 2002

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to begin by congratulating you Mr. President, for taking charge of this very important gathering. I also would like to congratulate the Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Demining, the Coordinating Committee, the Implementation Support Unit and Sponsorship programme for the wonderful work you are all doing in furthering the work of the Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines. Allow me to pay special tribute to Mr PETER SAGAR and Madam BORRERO for working tirelessly in coordinating the sponsorship programme. I would like to urge you to continue being charming even after working for long hours attending to delegates who are participating in this meeting through the sponsorship programme.

Mr. President, by way of a short back ground to Zambia's Landmine problem. The problem of landmines and associated military explosive devices in Zambia dates as far back as the 1960s' when freedom fighters from some of our neighboring countries waged liberation wars against colonial powers. It was during this period that landmines were planted in Zambia. The areas mostly affected are those along our border and former freedom fighters camps and we suspect there could be some mines around some of our many refugee camps.

And due to unconventional manner in which landmines were laid, there are no well defined minefields in Zambia. However, large areas of potential productive land in affected areas have been inaccessible areas for over 30 years. In these areas, many infrastructures and essential services such as roads, schools, health centres airstrips etc are no longer in use due to fear of the presence of landmines.

Indeed it was only recently that a consultant with a World Bank funded development project was killed by a landmine. That project has since stalled.

Mr. President, Zambia supports the total implementation of the Ottawa Convention. Proof of this commitment is the fact that we are now finalising the establishment of a Mine Action Centre. My country now has a small number of humanitarian deminers. This has been due to assistance we have received from a non State Party to this Convention, the United States of America. I would therefore like to appeal to our fellow States Parties to come to our assistance. In the same vein Zambia is still awaiting assistance from our other friends we have been talking to since last year. Zambia's landmine problem could be resolved within few years if she received some assistance in terms of training in mine action activities and provision of equipment.

Mr. President, even with limited resources we have begun demining the Southern part of our country. However, our national demining programme cannot be finalised until a National Impact Survey is carried out. This is a very expensive venture in terms of resources, I therefore call upon all concerned with the noble cause of eliminating anti-personnel mines from mother earth to come to our assistance in this particular field .

Mr. President, as a result of our failure to carry out the national survey, we have had difficulties in completing some parts of the article 7 update report.

Finally Mr. President, at the 3rd States Parties meeting in Nicaragua Zambia made an indication that the Ottawa Convention was being incorporated into the Zambia local legislation. I am happy to report that, this process is

expected to be concluded by the end of this year or early next year.

I wish you and all delegates fruitful deliberations during this conference.

Thank you Mr. President.

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