

## **Statement**

**by the delegation of the Republic of Poland**

### **“Poland’s position on the ratification of the Ottawa Convention”**

*(Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, 16 - 20 September, 2002, Geneva)*

*Mr. President,*

Let me first of all congratulate you, Ambassador Lint, on your election to this high office. I would like to assure you of my delegation full support and co-operation in your work.

*Mr. President,*

Poland aligned itself with the statement of the European Union. At the same time I would like to present some views on the Ottawa Convention.

I am glad to inform you that Poland as a Signatory-State to the Convention is going to submit on a voluntary basis our national report referring to Article 7 of the Convention. We share the view expressed in the President's Action Programme that Article 7 on "Transparency measures" is very essential to the operation of the Convention.

My country is interested in the effective universalisation of the Convention. On many occasions Poland has expressed views that in order to comply with anti-personnel mines policy set out by the Convention we need to find adequate alternative means. This process requires time. However, it should be pointed out here, that Poland has always regarded mines as a typically defensive weapon,

which may only be applied in a proper way reducing as much as possible human sufferings.

Poland already complies with the provisions of the Ottawa Convention concerning the prohibition of production and transfer of anti-personnel mines. We have created an interagency group of experts. Its task is to find the possibility of equipping the Polish Armed Forces with weapons alternative to anti-personnel landmines.

Furthermore, we are an active promoter of the values set out by the Convention among States of our region. A good example of this promotion was the organisation in Warsaw in June 2001 of the international conference entitled “Understanding the Ottawa Convention”. The conference, co-hosted by Poland and Canada, gathered the representatives of 20 countries - mainly from North-Eastern and Eastern Europe – as well as some Non-Governmental Organizations dealing with mine-related issues. The aim of the conference was to exchange the views and experience in the field of implementing the Mine Ban Treaty as well as proper understanding of the provisions of the Ottawa Convention.

Poland represents the view in which the success of the Ottawa Convention cannot and should not be measured only in terms of the number of States-Parties. We are convinced that the Ottawa Convention provides each State with a good framework for solving the mine question. A framework, which doesn't only rely on introduction of a political ban, but also on setting out the principles of demining and victim assistance.

We deeply believe that one of the most important ways of combating antipersonnel landmine hazards is to eliminate the possibility of their production and transfers. The Republic of Poland constantly supports all efforts, including those within the framework of the UN, the Conference on Disarmament and activities of States-Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons,

aimed at achieving some necessary restrictions on anti-personnel and other types of landmines.

Poland has been supportive of the international community's efforts to deliver assistance to post-conflict recovery areas while contributing troops, including a substantial portion of de-mining units to peace-keeping missions. For the last 5 years more than 700 Polish de-miners took active part in numerous international operations. A group close to half a hundred of Polish de-miners is still working in Afghanistan.

*Mr. President,*

I would like to voice my delegation's support for the President's Action Programme. We share the goals and measures set in this document.

Let me stress once again that Poland will continue its efforts to contribute to peace and stability, both regionally and globally, in all fields and will continue to give full support to international efforts aimed at that direction.

Thank you, Mr. President, for your attention.