



**Statement by His Excellency Mr. Hemayetuddin, Ambassador of Bangladesh  
and Leader of the Delegation at the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the  
Convention on the Prohibition of the Use; Stockpiling; Production and  
Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction  
Bangkok, September 2003**

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**Mr. President  
Mr. Secretary General  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Delegates**

May I begin by extending warm felicitations of the Bangladesh delegation to you on your election. Under your skillful and enlightened leadership, the success of the meeting is assured.

The Government of Thailand deserves our appreciation for hosting this first ever States Parties Meeting of the Anti-Personnel Mines Ban Convention in Asia. We are thankful to the Government of Thailand for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting and for their generous hospitality.

**Mr. President,**

We are happy to be with the majority of the world's nations in their endeavour to address a humanitarian crisis and to establish a world free of anti-personnel mines. Seeking general and complete disarmament is our constitutional commitment. Bangladesh is thus party to all international disarmament treaties covering nuclear, biological, chemical and conventional weapons. International peace and security, the security of the mother earth and, above all, human security have been our prime considerations. It was thus natural that we became party to the Inhumane Weapons Convention or the CCW upon its adoption in 1980.

The Ottawa Process raised global awareness about a humanitarian disaster that the anti-personnel mines have caused. It was from a deep humanitarian concern that Bangladesh signed on early to the Ottawa Convention, and was the first country from South Asia to ratify it in September 2000.

**Mr. President,**

States Parties have signed on to the Convention in good faith, in the hope that this would be universally accepted and implemented. No nation should be disadvantaged in strategic terms

for its commitment to a universal humanitarian concern. There should not be double standards, nor a dual value system or a dual legal regime.

I wish to stress that universalization remains central to the realization of the objectives of the Convention. We believe, more concerted efforts are needed in regions where many countries are yet to become party to the Convention. The Asia-Pacific region remains a challenge in this regard. In this context, we believe that the Bangkok Meeting presents an important opportunity to generate the necessary political momentum to move this process forward in the region.

Until universal acceptance of the Convention is achieved, we feel it is important to devise some mechanism to monitor the use or threat of use of mines by non-States Parties against States Parties. There should be a commitment from all States to respect the objectives of the Convention. Efforts should also be made to agree on stringent measures to monitor the activities of unscrupulous producers and dealers in landmines.

Another formidable challenge that confront us is the threat posed by non-state actors who continue to remain big users of landmines, and yet remaining outside the purview of any legal obligations. There is a need to reflect on this lacuna in the Convention. We believe that objectives of the Convention and its implementation should be non-discriminatory.

The development of command–detonated mines, their use and sale would be another source of concern, if not humanitarian, of strategic import. This would be another case of vertical proliferation establishing discriminatory regimes and disparity between countries.

International cooperation is a cornerstone to the success of the Convention. There is a genuine spirit of solidarity and collaboration. This is indeed laudable and exemplary. We hope that the Ottawa spirit will continue until all the objectives of the Convention are fully achieved. The developing countries need support in different areas – stockpile destruction, mine clearance, victim assistance and demining. In this context it should be stressed that the UN's capacity in global mine-action efforts needs to be reinforced by matching resources with needs.

**Mr. President,**

Bangladesh is not a mine producing, exporting or user country. Rather, Bangladesh has offered the expertise and services of its armed forces in demining and mine-clearance efforts in mine-affected countries under UN auspices.

A National Committee to coordinate the implementation of our obligations under the Convention was set up following our ratification in 2000. The Committee has been closely following up on our implementation efforts. We have been submitting our Article 7 reports in a timely manner. Right now, we are in the process of drafting of the national legislation. We have also drawn up a plan for our stockpile destruction. I am happy to inform that with support from the Canadian Government, we hope to start our stockpile destruction process soon. A GICHD technical assessment mission is expected to visit Bangladesh in October in this regard. We are hopeful of completing our stockpile destruction by the 2005 deadline.

Our decision to retain certain number of APMs, as mentioned in our Article 7 Report this year, is the minimum number absolutely necessary for purposes permitted under the Convention, namely, "development of and training in mine detection, mine clearance or mine destruction techniques." First of all, these are essential for Bangladesh's defence training needs, particularly in our specific geo-political context. Secondly, we need to train our engineering battalions for UN demining programmes. In order to respond to the UN's requirement, we have been preparing several of our army battalions with mine clearing capabilities. Currently, we have 243 personnel engaged in mine clearance in Kuwait and 168 with the UN Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia.

We have taken note of the Landmine Monitor Report. As has been confirmed, there was no APM casualty in Bangladesh in 2002 and 2003. The Government is in the process of preparing a complete list of the APM victims in the recent past with a view to providing necessary victim assistance. Any support for the victims and their families would be welcome.

**Mr. President,**

The First Review Conference next year in Nairobi will be a significant milestone for the Ottawa process. It will provide an opportunity for stock-taking of achievements made and challenges that remain. We hope that the Nairobi preparatory process will be inclusive, broadly representative and transparent, and marked by the traditional spirit of cooperation and collaboration of the Ottawa process. Bangladesh pledges its full support to the Conference and would remain closely involved in the process leading upto it.

**Mr. President,**

My delegation supports the appeal of the ICBL to this meeting of the States Parties. We would also put emphasis on:

- political and financial commitments to ensure full implementation of the Convention through 2009 and beyond;
- participation in the Resource Mobilization Contact Group chaired by Norway;
- universalization of the Convention; and
- consolidation of the new international norm on antipersonnel mines.

It is our hope that Bangkok Conference will create necessary impetus to the progressive achievement of the Ottawa objectives.

I thank you, Mr. President.

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