

Fifth Meeting of  
the States Parties to  
the Ottawa Convention  
Bangkok, 15-19 September 2003

16.09.2003  
16.00 h.

Check against delivery!

Statement  
by the Bulgarian Delegation

Thank you Mr. President,

At the outset may I congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention. I wish to extend my country's gratitude to you, Mr. President, your colleagues and the Coordinating Committee for the excellent job you have done in organizing this event. I would also like to take this opportunity to assure you that Bulgaria will render its full support for the successful conduct of this meeting.

My country fully associates itself with the statement made by Italy on behalf of the European Union.

This year's meeting is taking place in Thailand, a country affected by anti-personnel mines. Here we could sense and realize the tragic consequences of the use of weapons with indiscriminate effect. We hope that this forum will draw closer attention to the gravity of the problem caused by anti-personnel mines. Although the issue is already on the agenda of the international community, we should all make the necessary efforts to voice it even more audibly and to take further steps in reaching the ultimate goal – a landmine-free world.

My country notes with satisfaction the growing number of countries which have formally committed themselves to following the norms of the Convention. In this respect, we would like to reiterate our call to States not parties to the Convention, to abide by its principles and to consider its formal acceptance as soon as possible. Only a complete universalization of this important instrument of international humanitarian law can guarantee an end

of the needless suffering of innocent people. We also hope to be able to soon welcome our good neighbors and partners Greece and Turkey, which have started a procedure for accession to the Convention, as States Parties.

We highly praise the work and efforts done by the non-governmental organizations for the universalisation and implementation of the Convention.

As this meeting is a prelude to the First Review Conference, the final year of Intersessional Work Program is of great importance. Even more emphasis should be put on the core humanitarian objectives set in it. The work of the Standing Committees has always been a very efficient instrument for the fulfillment of the Convention's goals but their work in the coming year will be even more crucial. We highly commend the efforts of the Standing Committees and express satisfaction with the reports produced by them.

Mr. President,

We welcome the Action Program you have developed in accordance with the recommendations of the Standing Committees and note with satisfaction the priority given to the core humanitarian objectives. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that Bulgaria has gained experience and expertise and possesses technology in the field of mine destruction which will readily share in all relevant initiatives aiming at the complete and universal abolition of antipersonnel mines.

The First Review Conference in Nairobi, Kenya will be essential for the assessment of the achievements we have made and the challenges that remain before us. In this respect, it is a great pleasure to congratulate Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch as the President-Designate of the First Review Conference.

Let me conclude by joining the appeal made in the draft-declaration for the immediate cessation of the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel landmines by all those who have not done so. Thus we will be able to faster stop the killing and maiming of innocent people by this insidious type of weapons.

Thank you.