



REPÚBLICA DA GUINÉ-BISSAU
SECRETARIA DE ESTADO DOS COMBATENTES

The Secretary of States of Veterans Affairs of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau

Address by Mr Nhasse Na Ma, Secretary of States
and Head of Delegation of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau

15 September – 19 September 2003, Bangkok- Thailand

Mr President,
Excellencies,
Distinguish Delegates and Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel mines. I am confident that under your leadership, this States Parties meeting will achieve success, contributing to our struggle against landmines.

I would like to express, on behalf of my delegation, our sincere gratitude to the Thai People and the Royal Government of Thailand, for hosting this important forum and the hospitality extended to us at this occasion.

My delegation welcomes the new States Parties who just signed and ratified. Indeed it is encouraging to see the increasing number of new countries that adhere to this unique international instrument prohibiting completely the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines.

My delegation would like also to reaffirm to this assembly, our commitment in intensify our efforts to complete the articles of the Mine Ban Treaty which Guinea-Bissau signed in December 1997 and ratified on 22 May 2001 (116th states Party to the Convention), after the 1998-1999 political and military conflict.

By setting up the Guinea-Bissau Mine Action Coordination Centre (CAAMI) in 2001, the Government of Guinea-Bissau has engaged in Humanitarian Mine Action Programme, promoting a safer environment for the people of Guinea-Bissau, contributing significantly to the development of the socio-economic life of the country with the rehabilitation of infrastructures and agriculture areas through the establishment of a National Capacity.

The Government of Guinea-Bissau requested UNDP's support to address its mine problem in 1999. The UNDP mine action support project started in mid-2000, with technical assistance of UNOPS and UNICEF, WFP collaboration; and was incorporated in June 2001 in a broader nationally executed project on good governance.

Mr.President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The National Mine Action strategy of the Government of Guinea-Bissau is based on the four following broad strategic priorities as follows:

- *Strengthening National Coordination* to assure improvements by facilitating relationship among mine action actors;
- *Community Imperative* with Mine Risk Education, Survey, Clearance of the suspected areas, and raise pro-active participation in poverty reduction projects;
- *Development sustainability* as the mine action sector contributes to sustainable economic growth and the management of natural resources in order to facilitate micro-economic activities;
- *Implementation of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA)* used for managerial purposes between Government, UN agencies and NGOs as an effective tool to support multidisciplinary data collection and Mine Ban treaty reporting.

The CAAMI data base will receive soon the system from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and we are very pleased to address our special thanks to the Geneva Centre for this important assistance and for their recent assessment mission last month at Bissau.

Mr.President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government has been politically committed to banning the use of landmine, and it is planned to destroy the remaining limited stock, 3,997 anti-personnel mines, end of this year or later the first quarter of 2004, due to the current legislative election process planned for the next 12th of October.

The continued role of non-governmental organisations play in facilitating the successful and sustained implementation of Mine Ban Treaty is highly valued. Two National Demining NGOs are operating in the suspected areas of Bissau Capital. I would like also to express my sincere gratitude to the National Executed Demining Programme ADP for their special support and our Donors as Holand, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Sweden, Austria, and United States of America. By the end of July 2003, close to 505,000 m² have been cleared; 2,500 landmines and 16,000 UXOs destroyed.

Mr.President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

My delegation would like once again, express the gratitude of the people of Guinea-Bissau to all Donors, United Nations and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, with a special thanks to the conference manager Mrs Catherine Borrero which support us in kindly and professional manner; for their valuable contribution to held this country get rid of landmines. However, given the current state of Guinea-Bissau's, Donors are encouraged to continue the level of funding for the two/three coming years. We are prepared to take step-by-step more responsibilities to implement the Mine Action programme. We will continue to build up our capacity to fund and to manage our programme. Guinea-Bissau's speedy mine elimination process could mean that African nation rids itself of landmines in short term.

I thank you for your attention.