

**STATEMENT BY HON. STEPHEN K. TARUS,
ASSISTANT MINISTER OF STATE FOR PROVINCIAL
ADMINISTRATION AND NATIONAL SECURITY AND
HEAD OF DELEGATION OF KENYA**

**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**

17TH SEPTEMBER, 2003, BANGKOK, THAILAND

MR. PRESIDENT,
HONOURABLE MINISTERS,
EXCELLENCIES,
DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES.

ALLOW ME TO BEGIN, MR. PRESIDENT, BY CONGRATULATING YOU ON YOUR ELECTION TO PRESIDE OVER OUR DELIBERATIONS. MY DELEGATION HAS EVERY CONFIDENCE IN YOUR ABILITY TO STEER THIS MEETING TO A FRUITFUL CONCLUSION. LET ME ALSO CONGRATULATE THE PRESIDENT OF THE 4TH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES, H. E. AMBASSADOR JEAN LINT OF BELGIUM, FOR HIS BRILLIANT STEWARDSHIP OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE PAST YEAR. HAVING SERVED AS CO-CHAIR WITH HIM, MY DELEGATION IS PARTICULARLY APPRECIATIVE OF HIS HELPFULNESS, HIS EXCELLENT GRASP OF ISSUES, AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO GO THE EXTRA MILE IN SEARCH OF CONSENSUS.

LET ME ALSO CONVEY MY DELEGATION'S DEEPEST APPRECIATION TO OUR HOST, THE GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND, FOR THE VERY WARM WELCOME THEY EXTENDED TO US UPON OUR ARRIVAL, AND FOR THE UNLIMITED HOSPITALITY WE CONTINUE TO ENJOY.

of ^{THE} ^{KEN GSDM}

MR. PRESIDENT, IT IS INDEED FITTING THAT WE ARE MEETING IN THAILAND, A COUNTRY THAT IS LOCATED IN ONE OF THE MOST MINE AFFECTED REGIONS IN THE WORLD, AND ITSELF LITTERED WITH MINES. OUR MEETING HERE THIS WEEK

INDEED REMINDS US, IN A VERY REAL WAY, OF THE REASONS WHY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY DECIDED ON THE NEED FOR THE OTTAWA CONVENTION, AND OF THE LOFTY GOALS WE SET OURSELVES IN THIS INSTRUMENT.

I NEED NOT STRESS THE GRAVE DANGER POSED BY THE MILLIONS OF DEADLY LANDMINES CONTAMINATING MORE THAN SEVENTY COUNTRIES, AND CREATING ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS MAN-MADE PROBLEMS OF OUR TIME. THEIR DEVASTATING EFFECT ON INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITIES, CLAIMING THOUSANDS OF INNOCENT LIVES, MAIMING MANY AND CAUSING UNTOLD SUFFERING IS DEPLORABLE. THEIR INDISCRIMINATE CHOICE OF VICTIMS, BE THEY CHILDREN PLAYING IN A FIELD OR CIVILIANS GOING ABOUT THEIR DAILY ACTIVITIES, IS UNACCEPTABLE. WE MUST ALL JOIN TOGETHER TO ERADICATE THIS TERRIBLE SCOURGE AND THUS END THE UNBEARABLE SUFFERING IT CONTINUES TO INFLICT LONG AFTER THE END OF ARMED CONFLICT.

IT IS FOR THIS REASON, MR. PRESIDENT, THAT KENYA IS COMMITTED TO THE IDEALS OF THE CONVENTION, AND REMAINS KEEN TO SEE ITS UNIVERSAL ACCEPTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION. WE WELCOME THE GROWING SUPPORT MANIFESTED WORLDWIDE FOR THE CONVENTION, AND THE WIDE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS PROVISIONS BY STATES PARTIES AND NON-STATE PARTIES ALIKE. IN PARTICULAR, I WOULD LIKE TO APPLAUD THE GROWING NUMBER OF STATES THAT DO NOT

POSSESS ANY STOCKPILED ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES, INCLUDING THOSE THAT HAVE DESTROYED THEIR STOCKPILES.

IN THIS CONNECTION, MR. PRESIDENT, I AM PLEASED TO REPORT IN FULFILLING HER OBLIGATIONS TO THE CONVENTION, KENYA COMPLETED THE DESTRUCTION OF ITS ENTIRE STOCKPILES OF **35,774** ASSORTED ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES IN **AUGUST 2003** IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 4 OF THE CONVENTION. THIS DESTRUCTION WAS DONE TWO YEARS AHEAD OF KENYA'S DEADLINE FOR DESTRUCTION, WHICH IS **1ST JULY 2005**. KENYA IS THEREFORE HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE THAT IT NO LONGER HAS ANY STOCKPILES OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES, EXCEPT FOR A BARE MINIMUM OF 3,000 PIECES RETAINED FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH PURPOSES AS PROVIDED FOR IN ARTICLE 3 OF THE CONVENTION.

THE DESTRUCTION OF KENYA'S STOCKPILES WAS DONE BY KENYA ARMY ENGINEERS IN CONTROLLED AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY DETONATIONS WITNESSED BY FOREIGN DIPLOMATS ACCREDITED TO KENYA, OFFICIALS OF UNITED NATION AGENCIES AND GIVEN WIDE COVERAGE BY THE LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA.

KENYA'S COMMITMENT TO THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OTTAWA CONVENTION IS UNDERSCORED BY ITS ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE 'HIGH RISK' DEMINING OPERATION ALONG THE ERITREAN-ETHIOPIAN BORDER UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN

THAT AREA. THIS IS A TASK THAT KENYA ARMY ENGINEERS HAVE PERFORMED FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS AND CONTINUE TO DO SO. IN FACT, KENYA HAS RECENTLY DOUBLED THE NUMBER OF ITS DEMINING TEAM TO OVER 200 DEMINERS AS A DELIBERATE EFFORT TO EXPEDITE THE MINE CLEARANCE OPERATION AND THEREFORE ERADICATE THE CATASTROPHIC CONSEQUENCES OCCASIONED BY MINES.

FURTHERMORE, KENYA CONTINUES TO SUBMIT ITS ARTICLE 7 REPORT IN A TIMELY AND REGULAR MANNER AS REQUIRED. THEREFORE, AS A STATE PARTY, WE ARE PROUD TO REITERATE OUR FIRM STAND IN FAVOUR OF THE SPIRIT AND LETTER OF THE CONVENTION BY OUR ACTIONS, AND ESPECIALLY NOW AS WE PREPARE FOR THE FIRST REVIEW CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES WHICH WILL BE HELD IN NAIROBI NEXT YEAR.

IN THIS REGARD, MY DELEGATION WOULD LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE IT ATTACHES TO THIS LAST MEETING OF STATES PARTIES BEFORE THE FIRST REVIEW CONFERENCE. THIS MEETING WILL SET THE TONE FOR THE CONFERENCE WHERE WE AS STATES PARTIES WILL REVIEW OUR ACHIEVEMENTS, ASSESS WHERE WE STAND VIS-À-VIS THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CONVENTION, AND CHART THE WAY FORWARD.

MR. PRESIDENT, KENYA RECOGNIZES THE CONSIDERABLE BURDEN CARRIED BY MINE-AFFECTED

COUNTRIES. WE APPLAUD THE TEDIOUS AND EXTENSIVE WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THEM TO CLEAR HUGE TRACTS OF LAND OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES. WE ALSO WELCOME ^{THE} INDICATION THAT THE FIRST STATE (~~NICARAGUA~~) TO REPORT MINED AREAS, HAS NOW COMPLETED ITS CLEARANCE OBLIGATIONS. WE ALSO NOTE WITH GREAT SATISFACTION THE PROGRESSIVE DECLINE OF CASUALTY RATES IN A NUMBER OF THE WORLD'S MOST MINE-AFFECTED STATES, AND THE INCREASE IN ASSISTANCE FOR LANDMINE VICTIMS. WE ^{HOWEVER,} CALL FOR INCREASED ASSISTANCE TO THESE COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN AFRICA, WHICH IS THE MOST HEAVILY MINED CONTINENT. SUCH ASSISTANCE WOULD BE OF GREAT VALUE IN ENABLING THOSE GOVERNMENTS TO RID THEIR CITIZENS OF THE TERROR OF MINES AND ALLOWING THEM HELP MINE VICTIMS REBUILD THEIR LIVES.

MR. PRESIDENT WE WOULD LIKE TO STRONGLY URGE THOSE COUNTRIES THAT CONTINUE TO PRODUCE, ACQUIRE, USE, STOCKPILE OR TRANSFER ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES TO PUT AN EARLY END TO THESE ACTIVITIES AND JOIN THE INCREASING ^{CONCERN} OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN ERADICATING THESE DEADLY WEAPONS. ~~YESTERDAY~~ MR. PRESIDENT, DURING THE OPENING CEREMONY, WE WERE MOVED BY THE TEARS AND TESTIMONIES OF LANDMINE SURVIVORS. ^{AFFORDS TO} THE WORLD CANNOT SIMPLY IGNORE THE PLIGHT AND ASPIRATIONS OF THOSE AFFECTED BY LANDMINES BY CONTINUING TO ENGAGE IN

ACTIVITIES INCONSISTENT WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE CONVENTION.

IN CONCLUSION, MR. PRESIDENT, LET ME IN ADVANCE WELCOME YOU ALL TO KENYA NOT ONLY FOR THE FIRST REVIEW CONFERENCE BUT TO ALSO SAMPLE SOME OF OUR TOURIST ATTRACTIONS. I WISH THE FIFTH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES FRUITFUL DELIBERATIONS.

THANK YOU.