



REPÚBLICA DE MOÇAMBIQUE

**Speech by His Excellency Tobias Dai, Minister of National
Defense of the Republic of Mozambique at the Fifth Meeting of
the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention**

**Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique and on my behalf, upon your election to preside over the 5th Meeting of the States Parties of the Ottawa Convention to Ban Anti-personnel Mines and to express my confidence that under your humble leadership our work will be crowned with success.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand for hosting this meeting and for the excellent conditions made available to us since our arrival in this beautiful city of Bangkok. This meeting is taking place in a moment that we are working towards the realization in 2004 in Nairobi, of the next Review Conference, to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention.

I would like to welcome, Central African Republic, Gambia, Sao-Tome and Principe, Timor-Leste Cyprus, Belarus, Guyana, Lithuania for its ratification or acceding to the States Parties of the Ottawa Convention on Ban Anti-Personnel Mines and with whom we look forward to share our experience in search of the solutions for the problems facing the world in field of landmines.

Mr. Chairperson,

Despite significant awareness about the existence of the Ottawa Convention worldwide, unfortunately civilian population, in particular women and children, still suffer from the scourge of anti-personnel mines grassing various regions of the world, in complete disrespect of human dignity.

To reverse this situation, there is a need for a strong and clear commitment from all the States Parties, the international community and other relevant stakeholders to join efforts in turning the provisions enshrined in the Convention in to concrete actions at national, regional and international level.

We are of the view that our challenges, as States Parties, in addressing this sensitive issue of anti-personnel mines, in particular for those countries affected, must be the appreciation of the progress achieved by each country in the context of the Articles 4 and 9 of the Convention, the identification of constraints faced in the prosecution of our objectives and to proposition of tangible solutions, on the basis of the reality and concrete conditions of each country.

In doing so, we can contribute for a global and organized solution of the various problems faced by our countries in the process of implementation of the national programs of action against anti-personnel mines.

Mr. Chairperson,

Talking in the issue of anti-personnel mines continues to be in the top account its impact on the life of the population, priority of the Mozambique Government's agenda.

The central objective of the Government in this domain, which is contained in its 2002-2006 Plan of Action on mines, is to turn the country a mines free territory, by reducing the risk to human population in regards to injury and loss of life by increasing the number of demined or cleared areas. This process is being undertaken together with civil mine risk education and victims assistance programs.

It is in this context that during the first year of implementation of this Plan of Action, we have achieved approximately 9 million m2 clarified and more than 11.500 mines and 1.800 UXO'S destroyed.

Today, the impact of this action, together with the exercise of civil mine education and victim assistance is a tangible and a visible achievement, particularly as we witness an increase in provincial population movement and increased security for the population across the country. The achievement is running in parallel with the creation of the basic conditions to rehabilitate the economic and social infrastructure such as schools, water supply, railways, dawns, roads, hospitals and electricity system.

Moreover, the Government has dedicated more attention to the programs aimed at sensitization of the populations living in the landmines affected zones. With these actions of civil education and the on going demining process, Mozambique has significantly reduced mine incidents and accidents.

Mr. Chairperson,

As a State Part to the Convention and in order to comply strictly with the stipulated in the article 4 of the Convention, our country has finalized, in February of the current year, the process of destruction of mines in stock. This process begun in September 2000, with the destruction of the first 500 mines. Subsequent destruction brought the final figure to 37.818 of stockpiled landmines destroyed.

With relation to the article 9, of the Convention and conscious of the need to implement national measures to tackle the issue of landmines, Mozambique is engaged in a comprehensive process of preparation of a national legislation with the central objective to link citizens to existing national institutions.

Despite all this positive work being undertaken, we are still facing great challenges that are important to share with you, namely:

- The implementation of country wide technical survey in the high and medium priority impacted areas;
- Increasing level of demining activities in the northern provinces of the country; and
- The follow up of the multisectoral programs aimed at assisting mine victims and their social economic reintegration;

Mr. Chairperson,

Our recent experience on the issue of anti-personnel mines shows that the realization of mine action activities means the mobilization of a great number of material and financial resources. In this regard, we would like to take this opportunity to pay our gratitude to all the cooperating partners, for their valuable support in the realization of the various programs in the context of mine action.

However, we feel that some areas of assistance to mine victims and civic education, presently, need more support from our partners.

On this, I would also like to mention, here, that Mozambique has already some projects on technical assistance for mine victims, as action integrated on demining programe, which still face financial constrain for its implementation, and for who concern, should be presented.

I would like to conclude by appealing our cooperating partners for the continued financial assistance to Mozambique in order to achieve a best results on demining and technical assistance of mine victims and similarly, I hope that the "President's Plan of Action" to be adopted by this meeting will bring an additional impetus to the implementation of the Convention.

I thank you!

Bangkok, September, 2003