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**FIFTH MEETING  
OF STATES PARTIES  
TO THE OTTAWA CONVENTION**

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**Statement by  
H.E. Ambassador João de Lima Pimentel  
Head of the Delegation of  
PORTUGAL**

**BANGKOK  
15-19 September 2003**

Mr. President,

May I seize this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of this Conference and to wish you all the success in your endeavours.

Mr. President,

The delegation of Portugal entirely subscribes to the views expressed by the Presidency of the European Union and just would like to emphasize a few points.

Since de first moment, Portugal has been fully committed to the purposes of the Mine Ban Treaty. We are glad to announce that we have completed the destruction of our national stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines.

Mr. President,

We all agree that anti-personnel landmines are one of the major threats for civilians after the end of armed conflicts. The cruel, inhumane and indiscriminate effects of anti-personnel landmines can only be achieved by the eradication of these weapons.

Allow me therefore to join all those that are calling upon all States that have not yet signed and ratified the Mine Ban Treaty to do so without delay.

Indeed, our presence here in Thailand – a country that has known this scourge – is a reason of pride for all of us: it testifies our strong determination in putting an end to the use, development, production, transfer, and stockpiling of these weapons. A loud and clear message in this regard must come out of this Meeting.

Mr. President,

We applaud all those that have been taking practical steps in support of mine action.

We are directly giving support to Angolan children who are amputee war victims, through a Technical Military Co-operation Agreement.

We are studying further measures in this and in related fields in contact with interested third parties.

As a member of the European Union, we have also been supporting all action that has been undertaken in this regard by the EU or with EU support.

We expect such efforts to bear fruit in the years to come, progressing towards a World free from the scourge of anti-personnel landmines.

Thank you Mr. President.