

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE

At the 5th Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention of the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

(15-19 September, Bangkok)

Mr. President !

At the outset allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating you warmly upon your election as the President of the 5th Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention of the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

I feel obliged to express sincere gratitude to the Government of Thailand for hosting this important international meeting, as well as admiration to Thai people - known by its openness and cordial hospitality.

Mr. President !

Ukraine as a signatory state of the Ottawa Convention shares and whole-heartedly supports goals and principles enshrined in this outstanding multilateral international instrument. New cooperative approach, explored and put into practice by number of like-minded countries and non-governmental organizations gave rise to the world wide movement, aimed to exclude completely the threat to human being, which comes from the wide spread dissemination of these precarious tools of warfare. The worst characteristic feature of APLs is the ability to kill, maim or wound people indiscriminately and many years since the end of the military conflicts. Therefore mainly civilians suffer and became victims of their use.

From our perspective humanitarian aspect of the Ottawa Convention requires constant attention. Highest priority should be given to the victim assistance as well as to ensuring safety of those, who still live in mine-contaminated areas. Field trip organized by Thai Mine Action Center last Sunday underscored how risky, dangerous, time and resources consuming might be the conduct of de-mining operations. Both the countries conducting de-mining and donor community proceed from the presumption that no new APLs be put again into the soil. Otherwise this will be awful scenario one could have imagined. In this context we call upon those states which for security concerns remain outside the Ottawa Convention to seek with determination the ways to substitute APLs by other, not “inhumane” means of defense and adhere to the Convention. Despite changing and volatile security situation in various regions of the

world no country outside the “Ottawa process” could continue to ignore anymore public support and momentum, gained by the world wide campaign to ban APLs.

At the same time new focused approach is needed to help signatory-states in their efforts to become states-parties to the Convention. In this context I have the privilege to thank Canada, together with the Netherlands, Poland and Hungary for allocating financial resources to carry out destruction of 400 thousand APLs of PMN-type in Ukraine. This project started in January 2002 with the aim of disassembling the mines using industrial processes at the Donetsk Chemical Plant. On 27 May 2003 last PMN mine was destroyed. The good performance, showed by mentioned Ukrainian facility, provides very convincing argument for its eventual use in the destruction of existing PMN stockpiles of other countries in the region.

Notwithstanding the achievements in this field, Ukraine is obviously interested to draw the attention of the international community **to the issue of PFM stockpiles destruction.** Quantity of these mines – 6 million units and difficulties related to the technology to be chosen for APLs disposal compel Ukrainian side to request donor-states and manager of relevant project to redouble their efforts aimed to assist Ukraine in solving this important issue. From its part Ukraine makes necessary steps enabling ratification of the Mine Ban Treaty by Ukrainian legislative body. For the time being MFA of Ukraine as a coordinating authority of the ratification process received consent from appropriate ministries to submit the Ottawa Convention for the ratification by the parliament.

Simultaneously with this work MFA has submitted for the Government approval two draft regulatory decrees:

- “On establishment of intergovernmental group and action plan to solve the problem of old and surplus ammunition destruction in Ukraine and coordination of national implementation of the Ottawa Convention in Ukraine;
- “On ban of APLs transfers from Ukraine”. This ban will be of unlimited duration and is based on relevant article of the Ottawa Convention.

These steps are the testimony of Ukraine’s consistent policy in support of the Ottawa Convention and its main goal: mine-free world.

In conclusion of my statement, I have to thank GICHD Sponsorship Program, which enabled my participation in this meeting.