



REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

STATEMENT

by

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On

**The Fifth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention
on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and
Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction**

Bangkok, Thailand

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**Mr. President,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Guests,
Ambassadors, Members of Delegations, Ladies and Gentlemen . . .**

It is indeed an honour for me to represent Guyana at this meeting. Congratulation to you Mr. President, we are confident that your wisdom and inspired leadership will take us to new and more promising frontiers in the pursuit of peace and development. To our host country, Thailand, we offer our profound thanks for receiving us with such warmth and care for our comfort. Allow me also to commend Ambassador Jean Lint of Belgium on his skillful stewardship and leadership as President of the Fourth Meeting. I wish to extend fraternal greetings to all delegations present, and to convey our best wishes for success in our deliberations.

Mr. President, Guyana attaches great importance to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. On 5th August 2003 the Government of Guyana deposited its instrument of ratification of the Convention, which will enable us to become a full Party with effect from 1st February 2004. My Government remains committed to working with the international community to eradicate the danger to human life and livelihood represented by anti-personnel mines.

“Peace will not come out of a clash of arms but out of justice lived and done by unarmed nations in the face of odds.” M.K. Gandhi

Mr. President, Coming as it does at a critical juncture in time, this Meeting offers us a timely opportunity to examine current developments and trends in order to better prepare our countries to face today's challenges. Essentially today, we are here as stakeholders, to explore the possibilities held out by the agreements made in the Convention and present practical interventions for victim assistance, mine clearance, and the destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines.

It is imperative that assistance be provided to landmine survivors, especially given the fact that 15,000 to 20,000 landmine victims, many of which are children aged between 6 and 12 years, and each year are added to the hundreds of thousands who already live with the disabilities caused by mines. This situation should lead us to redouble our efforts, through solidarity and cooperation, to strengthen our collaborative efforts to safeguard internal security, territorial integrity, and national development.

We should continue to reach out and take the initiative to heighten engagement between Governments and Civil Society at both the national and regional levels to devise a holistic strategy that will serve as a possible way forward. This will ensure mine action resources are focused on achieving maximum humanitarian benefit for casualty reduction as well as individual, community and national development. The success of the Review Conference of 2004 would depend largely on the effectiveness of the preparatory process.

Mr. President, Guyana calls upon all States to renew their efforts to support and advance the care, rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of mine victims, mine-awareness programmes, and the removal of anti-personnel mines in the various regions of the world.

Mr. President, All of these challenges are multi-dimensional and profoundly impact the social, economic, political and environmental existence of the states concerned. They continue to take a heavy socio-economic toll on our small countries, and addressing them with the aim of finding solutions is a critical element in allaying security fears and solidifying the culture of democracy in our states.

We must therefore place emphasis on the need for the dialogue on peace and security to move beyond the traditional discourse of military threats. It must be expanded to include those challenges faced by developing countries.

Positive concrete actions and assistance will also enable the international community to show international cooperation.

Mr. President, This Meeting must vigorously reaffirm the priorities of all member states, the international community and the Convention as the blueprint for future progress and development. A renewed pledge must be made to provide sufficient resources and an open exchange of information in order to enable countries to fully implement sustainable strategies to eliminate anti-personnel mines. It is important that consideration be given to the question of facilitating participation of all Parties to the Convention in meetings such as this one. Today, security and counter-terrorism concerns perhaps understandably overshadow many other issues with which we grapple. At this critical time, we must therefore intensify our efforts to develop our international institutions through genuine reform, restructuring and mobilization of resources.

Mr. President, We look forward to the outcome of the Meeting in the hope that it will enable the international community to go beyond the prescriptions of the Convention to expedite the process of implementation. If we apply ourselves to these tasks, we can be sure that our efforts will eventually bring us closer to the achievements of the principal goals of the Convention. **I thank you.**