

THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE STATE PARTIES TO THE  
CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE,  
STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER OF ANTI-  
PERSONNEL MINES AND THEIR DESTRUCTION,  
STATEMENT OF FINLAND - Bangkok 16.9.2003

Mr. President,

Let me first join those who have spoken before me in congratulations for the presidency of this meeting as well as in thanking the government and people of Thailand for their hospitality.

Finland fully subscribes to the views expressed by the Presidency of the European Union earlier this week. I would just like to say a few words to update you on the situation of Finland in respect to the Convention.

In the Fourth Meeting of the State Parties to the Convention last year in Geneva, Finland stated that its objective is to accede to the Convention in 2006 with a view of destroying the APL's by the year 2010, without compromising Finland's credible defence capability.

Since then the Government has changed in Finland. The objective has, however, remained valid.

Accession to the Convention will be discussed and decided upon as part of entire Finnish defence policy to be reviewed on the basis of a White Paper that will be issued by the Government next year.

Mr. President,

Finland has been engaged in mine clearance activities more than ten years now. Since 1998 the level of funding has been around 5 million euros per year. At the moment there are ongoing mine action programmes that receive funding from Finland in ten different countries around the world. It is expected that the level of funding will remain around the same also in the coming years – our status in respect to the Convention will not influence it. Our engagement in mine action has not been linked to anything but humanitarian needs in affected countries. Finland itself does not have minefields and it does not either produce or export antipersonnel landmines.

All this does not mean that we wish to argue that we are already doing our share.

On the contrary, we do recognize that there is yet another dimension in the issue – that is our share of the responsibility in reinforcing the universal norm ban landmines which is often forgotten in our domestic discussions.

However, I wish to assure you, Mr. President, that in the forthcoming decision making process this responsibility will get due consideration.

Thank you Mr. President.