

**Eighth 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**

**Dead Sea, Jordan
18 – 22 November 2007**

**Statement by
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Head of the Bangladesh Delegation**

Statement by Bangladesh Delegation at the 8th MSP of the AP Mine Ban Convention, Dead Sea, Jordan, 18-22 Nov 2007

Allow me to convey warm felicitations to you and to the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on the detailed preparatory work and the excellent organization of the 8th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention. This attests to Jordan's abiding commitment, exemplified by the personal and extensive contribution of His Majesty King Abdullah II, to the goals of the Convention and to the international humanitarian agenda.

My delegation congratulates you on your election as President. We are confident that under your able leadership, the Meeting would take substantive decisions towards achieving the goals set by the Convention. Bangladesh delegation offers full support and cooperation to you.

General Comments

The Land Mine Ban Convention represents the strong, collective resolve of the international community to rid the world of Anti-Personnel Mines. 2007 marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention. Much progress has been made over the last decade. The rapid rate of ratification and activities undertaken in various areas of implementation are ample demonstration of our collective resolve to have a mine-free world.

Bangladesh's commitment to this goal was demonstrated when we became a signatory at an early stage. Subsequently, Bangladesh was the first country from South Asia to ratify the Convention in September 2000. Our decision was guided by a genuine humanitarian commitment made against real national security concerns.

That is why we are dismayed to see that anti-personnel mines continue to claim victims and pose humanitarian challenge in many parts of the world.

Universalization

We believe the answer lies in achieving universalization of the Convention. We stress the need for more concerted efforts for achieving this in regions with low rates of ratification. We hope that this MSP would generate political momentum for achieving universalization, including in the Asia-Pacific region.

Until universal acceptance is achieved, we feel it is important to devise ways to get commitment from all States to respect the objectives of the Convention and monitor the use or threat of use of mines by Non-States Parties. Efforts should also be made to agree on stringent measures to monitor the activities of unscrupulous producers and dealers in landmines.

Another formidable challenge is the threat posed by non-State actors. They continue to remain big users of landmines, yet remain outside of any legal framework. We believe there is a need to address this lacuna in the Convention.

Implementation Measures Undertaken by Bangladesh

Bangladesh never produced or exported mines. There are no known or suspected mined areas in Bangladesh. Following ratification in 2000, a National Committee was set up to coordinate the implementation of our obligations under the Convention. The Committee has been following up on our implementation efforts.

Bangladesh army never used anti-personnel mines. Rather, its expertise in this area has been effectively employed in clearing mines and other unexploded ordnances in UN peacekeeping operations as well as bilaterally, in countries such as Eritrea and Ethiopia, Kuwait, Liberia and Sudan.

Bangladesh completed destruction of 189,227 stockpiled anti-personnel landmines in February 2005. Given the involvement of Bangladesh Army in demining activities in many parts of the world as a top force contributing country to UN peacekeeping operations, the country has retained 12,500 mines for training its personnel in mine awareness and mine handling.

Bangladesh Army also provides mine-related training to police officials and university level forestry students at eight training facilities. The training is aimed at increasing their awareness of the differences between mines, improvised explosive devises and unexploded ordnance.

With regards to mines recovered after the destruction deadline, as soon as such mines are recovered, they are taken to the nearest destruction sites and immediately destroyed maintaining necessary safety measures. These mines are never listed in the inventory of the retained stockpiles for training purposes of the Bangladesh Army.

Bangladesh is fulfilling her reporting obligations under Article 7 in a timely manner. We note that some forms have been expanded to seek additional information and increase transparency while other proposals are waiting for approval of the States Parties. On our part, we are working to provide additional information, as required, when we submit our next report by March 2008.

International Cooperation

International cooperation is a cornerstone to the success of the Convention. We hope this cooperation will continue, particularly in assisting the efforts of LDCs and other developing countries through provision of creative, cost-effective and efficient technologies for mine clearance and mobilization of funds for demining efforts, stockpile destruction and assistance to mine victims and affected populations.

Implementation Support and Sponsorship Programme

We appreciate the role of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of the GICHD as they continue to assist States Parties to implement the Convention's obligations and objectives. ISU's advice, information services and assistance in addressing various implementation challenges have proven effective.

The Sponsorship Programme enables States Parties that have constraints to attend the MSPs. We have benefited from the Programme in the past and we thank the donors for their sustained contribution. We stress that States Parties that are LDCs should be accorded priority while applying the criteria for selection of recipient countries. LDCs, after all, are the ones having greater resource constraints compared to other countries.

Concluding Remarks

We recognize that sustained effort is needed to achieve a mine-free world. Challenges are aplenty, but we cannot waver in our efforts. We have come a long way since Ottawa. Let us renew our collective pledge to fulfill what we had set out to achieve. Let the Dead Sea Progress Report make a difference and make the world safer and more humane. Bangladesh pledges its full support to this endeavour and would remain closely involved in the deliberations during the Meeting.