

Statement by Mr. Gunaajav Batjargal,
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Mr. President,

As Mongolia is taking the floor for the first time at the Ninth Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as President of this important meeting.

Mongolia is attending this meeting as an observer. However, Mongolia firmly denounces the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel mines and fully supports the efforts being undertaken by the international community to ban this dangerous weapon.

Mongolia also consistently supports the spirit and principles of the Ottawa Convention from its very outset. Since 1997 we have voted in support of all the United Nations General Assembly resolutions on the implementation of the Convention. We will do this again this year.

Mongolia does not possess any facilities for manufacturing landmines. Moreover, we has never deployed or used landmines. Mongolia is not a mine-affected country. However, unexploded ordinance is present in Mongolia and causes a great deal of threats to the life of the people in remote areas of the vast territory.

We maintain a step-by-step approach to our accession to this landmark treaty. During his visit to Canada in 2004, Mongolia's President stated that Mongolia would submit a national report under Article 7 of the Convention in accordance with the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions. There were, however, some legal procedures that had to be followed prior to the actual report submission. Two years ago we declassified the information regarding anti-personnel mines in the country and we have since voluntarily presented our national report to the United Nations under Article 7 of the Ottawa Convention.

Mr. President

At present, Mongolia holds over 200,000 antipersonnel mines. We have repeatedly stated that Mongolia would neither acquire nor transfer landmines. We shall remain ensuring a safe storage of the stocks of the existing antipersonnel mines in our own country.

Drawing a strategy to bring about our step-by-step accession to the Ottawa Convention is still a challenge. In particular, a lack of financial, technical and human resources necessary for stockpile destruction causes considerable concern. Therefore, cooperation and assistance in this area along both bilateral and multilateral channels would be invaluable for us, perhaps, prior to Mongolia's actual accession. We believe this will further reinforce an unwavering support for the Convention and greatly assist us in honouring our commitment without delay once joined.

In conclusion, I would like to express our appreciation to the Government of the United Kingdom for its continued support, which enables us to attend and benefit from the meetings of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention in recent years.

Thank you, Mr. President.