

## President Karzai Remarks

I am pleased to have the opportunity to address this important gathering of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention. This is a key moment for the world to stop and evaluate the importance of the humanitarian principles contained in the Convention. To see how far we have come, and where we are going toward our goal of defeating the landmine problem.

Anti-personnel mines are weapons of war that cannot be justified. Sadly, Afghanistan is known as the most mine-affected country and Afghans know first-hand the terrible effects of landmines. Decades after they were used to achieve military objectives in my country, landmines continue to kill innocent civilians. They do not discriminate -- women, men and even children have become their victims in numbers exceeding a hundred thousand. And even now, despite considerable work to clear the mines, new victims still number in the thousands.

The country as a whole has also been victimized by the effects of landmines. These mines have crippled our ability to re-build our country, and build the infrastructure that's needed to for us to prosper and establish a stable and productive society. The challenges we face are great.

But the importance of today's meeting is not only that we have made significant progress towards a "mine-free" future in countries like Afghanistan. The real importance of this gathering is to acknowledge the

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fact that the international community has studied the global mine problem, and we know that it is one we can solve, if we commit ourselves to the task.

We need resources to solve the problem, many resources in the case of Afghanistan – equipment, technical expertise, and the funds to support Afghan deminers. How quickly we are able to reach our goal of eliminating anti-personnel mines from Afghanistan, will depend on the support we receive from the international community.

The challenge that lies before us is simple:

No More Mines -- No More Victims

That is why we have come together in Nairobi, and that is the goal that Afghanistan has pledged to meet. Our Convention deadline for clearing all mined areas is 2013

With the support of donors, the United Nations, and the rest of the international community, we can meet this challenge.

Today let us celebrate the difference this Convention has made in the lives of so many, but let us not forget that we still have much work to do.

Thank you for your attention.



**Government of Afghanistan  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

**Remarks by: Dr Mohammad Haider Reza – Afghanistan Head of Delegation  
Nairobi Summit on a Mine Free World 29 November – 03 December 2004**

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen

You have heard the words of our President; His Excellency Hamid Karzai expressed both the sadness and hopes of the Afghan people, as we continue to struggle to overcome the devastating effects of landmines in our country. The Government of Afghanistan's pledge is to reduce the mine victims in Afghanistan to Zero as quickly as possible.

Twenty-five years of war have devastated Afghanistan's countryside and infrastructure. However, we are resilient and over the past 15 years, we have been working to clear our land of mines.

The United Nations together with the donors and the Afghan communities began their support for mine clearance in Afghanistan in 1989. Since those early days, the mine action programme for Afghanistan has evolved into the largest mine action programme in the world. It now involves over 20 nongovernmental and commercial organizations, employing more than 8,000 people. The size and scale of this effort illustrates the commitment of Afghans to ridding our country of anti-personnel mines.

Between 1989 and 2003, as many as 850 km<sup>2</sup> of minefields and former battlefield area has been cleared. Afghans have destroyed in excess of 290,000 AP mines, 21,000 anti tank mines and 5.3 million items of unexploded ordnance.

Afghanistan's mine action programme also supports the Country's' educational programmes ensuring avoidance and risk from mines is understood. Our children are a special concern for us, so Afghanistan's education ministry has been working with UNICEF and the MACA to ensure that over 50,000 Afghan teachers are taught to teach children how to avoid risks. In total, over 10 million people have been trained in mine risk education throughout the country.

Landmine survivors are being provided with physical rehabilitation services and much needed support is required for rebuilding their lives and livelihoods.

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Our recently completed Landmine Impact Survey has told us that as many as 2,400 Afghan communities are affected by landmines and other explosive remnants of war. These 2,400 communities are home to more than 6 million people who have returned or are waiting for the opportunity to return to their homes.

Mine have fundamentally crippled our society. They have attacked the very foundations of it – schools, hospitals, playgrounds, roads and land for growing food.

Afghanistan made the decision to support the Convention's aims, because those aims are also the aims of the Afghan people. We want to make sure that our land is never contaminated with these deadly weapons again, and that future generations do not suffer the same fate that we have suffered.

At this point, I would like to use this opportunity to;

Thank the donor countries that have supported mine action in Afghanistan.

Ridding our world of landmines is ridding the whole world of landmines.

We have a plan to rid our piece of the globe by the 2013 deadline, please help us make our plan a reality.

Thank you for your attention.