

Statement of Pakistan in the 16th 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 (APLC or Ottawa Convention)

Mr. President,

My delegation would like to congratulate you on becoming the President of the 16th Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention. Pakistan is participating in this meeting as an Observer.

Pakistan supports the humanitarian objectives of the Ottawa Convention and is guided by humanitarianism and respect for International Humanitarian Law and protection of civilian life.

Pakistan is a Party to the Convention on Prohibition or Restrictions on the use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its five Protocols. One of the five Protocols, i.e. Amended Protocol-II (AP-II), deals with Anti-Personnel Landmines (APLs). Pakistan supports the balanced approach of the Amended Protocol-II on APLs, which addresses the humanitarian concerns while also taking into account legitimate security requirements of states.

Pakistan is fully compliant with the provisions of AP-II. While our security needs necessitate the use of APLs, this is done in accordance with international norms, safety parameters and humanitarian considerations.

The use of landmines is exclusively by the military for defence purposes. Furthermore, Pakistan continues to scrupulously adhere to a policy of ban on all exports of mines, and ensures that the private sector is not allowed to manufacture or to trade in landmines.

There are no permanently laid mines on Pakistan's international borders. All mines placed during military escalations in the past have been lifted by our armed forces.

Article 5 of the Amended Protocol II requires that a state take steps to ensure the effective exclusion of civilians from the mined areas. Marking, fencing, and monitoring of mined areas are common ways through which effective exclusion is accomplished by the Pakistan Army. Pakistan has produced only detectable anti-personnel mines since January 1, 1997.

Mine education is also part of syllabi at different military schools of instruction and training centers. Periodic programmes for the education of civilians, especially children are also held in areas contiguous to Pakistan-India border.

Mr. President,

Pakistan Army has acquired considerable expertise in de-mining operations. This expertise has been extensively applied in UN-sponsored de-mining programmes in several peace keeping operations in which Pakistan has participated. Pakistan is one of the largest troop contributors to the UN Peacekeeping operations.

Pakistan's contributions to de-mining operations in Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, East Timor, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia and Sierra Leone have been widely acknowledged and appreciated. Pakistan remains committed to international cooperation in de-mining under the UN umbrella and international efforts to develop new techniques for humanitarian de-mining.

Pakistan believes that there should be unrestricted transfer of mine clearance technology, equipment and training to mine affected countries.

Pakistan has itself been a victim of the use of landmines, including as IEDs, by terrorists and non-state actors. Notwithstanding their use by terrorists, Pakistan's security forces do not use mines for the maintenance of internal order and law enforcement or in counter-terrorism operations.

Pakistan is supportive of an international legal instrument banning the *transfer* of APLs. Such an instrument will help in preventing the acquisition of landmines by non-state actors and terrorists as a majority of civilian casualties result from use of landmines by such actors.

Mr. President,

We believe that the objective of the total elimination of anti-personnel mines can be promoted, inter alia, by making available non-lethal, militarily and cost effective alternate technologies.

I thank you Mr. President