

**The Fifth Review Conference of the Anti - Personnel Mines Convention the
Convention from 24th 30 November 2024 – Siem Reap, Cambodia**

Mr. President, the Gambia also joined other state partes to congratulate you on your presidency and thank you for your wonderful leadership in steering the affairs of this convention with dedication, determination and commitment. Your competency is indeed manifested in the way and manner you have being steering this 5th Review Conference. Further, The Gambia would like to thank the Prime Minister, the government and the people of Cambodia for the warm welcome and hospitality they have accorded to The Gambia delegation since its arrival in the city of Siem Reap Angkor.

Mr. President

The republic of The Gambia is proud to be a state party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the foundation of which is based on transparency and mutual accountability, the Republic of The Gambia believes that these founding and guiding principles continue to remain dynamic to full and complete implementation of the convention. In respect of this, the Republic of the Gambia wishes to update State parties on its level compliance Article 7, article 3 and article 9 of the Convention and also cooperation and assistance.

Mr. President

The Gambia ratified the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention/treaty in 2003. However, it did not conduct any compliance activity until 2017 following the advent of the new dispensation which happens to be the second republic.

Mr. President

Concerning Article 9 of the Convention, The Gambia at current has no exclusive legislation on the AP Mines, however, the AP Mines issues are captured under the Arms and Ammunition laws. This as relate to the convention is deemed sufficient for its implementation.

On the aspect of compliance as regards article 3, and putting aside article 1 in this respect, The Gambia is in full compliance, since she retains a number up to 100 of anti-personnel mines for the purpose of developing of and training in mine detection, mine clearance and mine destruction techniques. The Gambia ensures the retention of mines that do not exceed the minimum number absolutely necessary for the above-mentioned purposes. She also complied as indicated in this provision the

transfer of anti-personnel mines from point of clearance to a safer place for the purpose of destruction.

Mr. President

The Gambia considered this Convention as a success story due to its effective multilateralism. As a key disarmament instrument, the Convention came up with global standard against the use of anti-personnel mines with a wide-range of response to end the suffering and casualties caused by these weapons and ammunitions. Since the signing of the Convention two decades ago, millions of mines have been destroyed. However, the convention should encourage and pressure all state parties and even non state parties to desist from the production and transfers of these deadly, destructive weapons that destroy the lives of innocent people particularly women and Children

It is clear that the Convention did not still achieve its objectives in full, there still remain significant challenges across the world. Anti-personnel mine contamination as we all know continue to cause harm, inculcate fear in to the people, restrict their movement, deny them access to farm land, and obstruct their socio-economic development. It is without doubt that the remains of anti-personnel mines and explosive from war place a high and undesirable burden on individuals, families, communities, regions and States. It is in respect of these significant challenges; The Gambia calls for the universalization of Convention.

Mr. President

On the aspect of challenges, the fact that The Gambia is committed and compliant to the treaty and has declared mine free, she is constrained to ensuring that the Foni-Casamance belt is completely clear of Anti-personnel mines as it does not have the jurisdiction to survey areas that falls in Senegal. However, it is paramount that the two states collaborate and joint together to conduct a survey, to detect and clear mines in these areas just like they are collaborating in area of integrated border management. In addition, The Gambia lacks state of earth equipment that it could use to embark on identification activities, detection and clearance of mines and therefore required these items to equip its security personnel tasked for demining in case of new discoveries.

Mr. President

The mine incidents that occurred in the Foni – Casamance belt triggered anti-personnel mines campaign that was conducted for a period of two weeks as mentioned above. However, this is not enough as all the villages in the Foni area particularly those that were not reached, need to be sensitized about what an anti-personnel mine is and its presence along these belts to prevent future occurrences of mine fatality/incidents

Mr. President

Adequate and sustainable support to mine victims is indeed a priority for The Gambia, The Gambia have been providing assistance to the mine victims including rehabilitation and psychosocial support. The Gambia further planned to provide short- medium- and long-term health care services to mine victim to make them feel honoured and dignified. **The Gambia also plan Economic Reintegration/support** for mine victims which will include development of programs to integrate survivors into economic activities in order to address their livelihood challenges so that they can also have dignified life and livelihood. However, The Gambia though with this tangible and laudable plan is constraint budgetarily to embark on most of these exercises for now.

Awareness raising on the danger of anti-personnel and how the communities could be safeguarded from its impact was conducted but halted due to some logistic issues including finance, the Gambia therefore needs support to continue the exercise for the remaining villages that are not covered. **It is also essential to highlight that** The Gambia lacks sufficient trained personnel in The Gambia Armed Forces (GAF) who are the implementing agent for mine identification, detection and clearance thus needs more trained personnel in these areas.

On cooperation and assistance, as usual, The Gambia, would like to continue cooperating and Collaborating with Regional and International Partners **to be provided both financial and Technical Support/Expertise** to enable the fully implementation of planned activities. The support from international donor and agencies, individual countries dedicated to mine action would help the Gambia improve life for the mine victims and the affected communities.

In conclusion, Mr. President, these mentioned efforts will not only make The Gambia fully comply to obligations (Mine treaty) but will also ensure safer communities,

foster and inculcate trust among the people and restore the dignify life they have been enjoying before.

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