Statement on 16th October 2002
on resolution L entitled «Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and On Their Destruction»

H.E.M. Ambassador Jean Lint
Permanent Representative of Belgium
to the Conference on Disarmament

I take the floor to present resolution L entitled «Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and On Their Destruction» as President of the 4th Meeting of States Parties and in the name of Nicaragua, President of 3MSP and of Thailand, future President of the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties.

Since the First Committee of last year, anti-personnel mines have made an estimated 15 – 20,000 new victims. There is thus an urgency to effectively address this humanitarian problem.

That is the reason why, in the preamble of our resolution, we reaffirm our determination to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines. We believe it necessary to do the utmost to clear those coward and deadly weapons, assure their destruction and provide for the care, rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of mine victims.

We welcome the entry into force on 1 March 1999 of the Convention and note with satisfaction the work undertaken to implement it.

After having recalled the Meetings of the States Parties at Maputo, Geneva and Managua, we have added a paragraph recalling the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties held at Geneva from 16 to 20 September 2002 and the final declaration reaffirming the commitment of the States Parties to further intensify their efforts in those areas most directly related to the core humanitarian objectives of the Convention.

We note with satisfaction that additional States have ratified or acceded to the Convention. Indeed, since the Meeting at Managua last year, nine new States have joined the Convention: by chronological order, Nigeria, Algeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Suriname, Afghanistan, Cameroon, the Comoros and Gambia. I would like to congratulate them. The total number of States, having formally accepted the obligations of the Convention, now amounts to 129. Moreover, 16 States have signed but not yet ratified the Convention.

We emphasize the desirability of attracting the adherence of all States to the Convention, and we say we are determined to work strenuously towards the promotion of its universalization. In that respect, the regional approach has proven to be useful in some parts of the world, in Africa and in Latin America. It could be useful elsewhere.

Finally, we note with regret that anti-personnel mines continue to be used in conflicts around the world, causing human suffering and impeding post-conflict development.
OP 1 invites all States that have not signed the Convention to accede to it without delay. Universality is one of the major objectives of the Convention and, in this context, I encourage the 49 States, which have not signed the Convention to accede to it as soon as possible. I want here to highlight the co-sponsorship of Papua New Guinea, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Tonga and Timor-Leste as well as the statement of Turkey which reaffirmed that it will deposit its instrument of accession on the same date as Greece which ratified nationally last March.

OP 2 urges the 16 States that have signed but not ratified the Convention to ratify it without delay. The fact that the majority of the Signatories co-sponsor our resolution is an encouraging signal.

However, it is also important that the Convention be fully and effectively implemented and complied with, as is stressed in OP 3. In this regard, the Fourth Meeting of States Parties recalled that the four-year maximum time period for the destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines is less than five months away for those States, which became Parties in March 1999.

In OP 4, we remind the obligation prescribed in Article 7 to provide the Secretary-General with the initial and yearly reports of transparency. More than 80% of the States Parties have complied with this requirement and it is fundamental that those, which have not yet done so, submit these reports as soon as possible.

OP 5 invites the States that have signed the Convention but not yet ratified it as well as the States which have not acceded to the Convention to provide, on a voluntary basis, information to make global mine action efforts more effective.

OP 6 renews the call to all States and other relevant parties to work together to promote, support and advance the care, rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of mine victims, mine risk education programmes, and the removal of anti-personnel mines placed throughout the world and the assurance of their destruction.

OP 7 invites and encourages all interested States, the United Nations, other relevant international organizations or institutions, regional organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and relevant non-governmental organizations to participate in the programme of intersessional work. This process makes it possible, in an informal framework, to promote exchanges between States Parties and those, which have not yet adhered as well as between States and the civil society.

OP 8, which has been adapted in relation to last year's, requests the Secretary-General to undertake the preparations necessary to convene the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention at Bangkok from 15 to 19 September 2003. I would like here to thank the Thai authorities for their offer to host the Meeting in their country.

Our resolution is already supported by 119 co-sponsors coming from all regional groups. It is a remarkable result, which reflects the spirit of the Convention, that of openness, of cooperation between mine-affected and other countries, as well as governments and non-governmental organizations. It is in this spirit that we wish to have the co-sponsorship of all States parties and Signatories of Convention as well as the highest possible number of States that have not yet acceded to the Convention but are committed to accede to it in a near future.