



NORWAY

PERMANENT MISSION OF NORWAY TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN GENEVA, 35BIS AVENUE DE BUDE, 1202 GENEVA. TEL. +4122 918 04 00

**STATEMENT TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
BY**

**H.E. SVERRE BERGH JOHANSEN
AMBASSADOR
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NORWAY
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN GENEVA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 5th ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE CONVENTION ON THE
PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION
AND TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON
THEIR DESTRUCTION**

Geneva, 26 February 2004

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Mr. President,

I take the floor today to mark that the Mine Ban Convention entered into force five years ago.

This Convention is both a humanitarian and a disarmament treaty. It proves that multilateralism works. States Parties are committed to the Convention, and there is a strong political will among them to ensure its success. Its establishment and implementation also reflect a close and constructive partnership between governments and civil society. In addition, it has established a norm against the use of landmines which is widely respected, also beyond the 141 states that have acceded to the Convention. We take this opportunity to underline the importance of universalising this crucial instrument, and urge the states that have not yet done so to join the Convention.

Norway was among the initiators in establishing the Mine Ban Convention, and is particularly happy to note that it has, so far, been highly successful. It provides the primary framework for mine action and a global and effective humanitarian instrument. Since the Convention's entry into force, fewer governments use anti-personnel landmines, and their production has decreased. As mine clearance proceeds and mine risk education programmes are implemented, the number of new mine victims is decreasing in many mine affected countries. Stockpiles are decreasing. To date, more than 31 million stockpiled mines have been destroyed.

Notwithstanding its success, considerable work still remains to be done to fulfil the objective of the Convention: a world free of mines. We should not lose focus on the challenges that are before us.

- Anti-personnel landmines remain a serious threat to lives, health, and development. We are still facing a humanitarian emergency.
- Even if many stockpiled mines have been destroyed, this process is far from finished, and needs to proceed.
- Much more needs to be done with respect to mine clearance. A lower number of mine victims does not mean that the job is done – it means that we are on the right way. Too many people fall victim to anti-personnel landmines.
- We have an obligation to help the victims. As mines continue to claim victims, the total need for assistance continues to grow. Mine victims need assistance for many years, often for life.

The First review conference of the Convention will take place in Nairobi, Kenya, in December this year. It will provide an opportunity to address the remaining challenges. We hope that the Review Conference will produce what we need to carry out this job: a strong and clear commitment to continue implementing the Mine Ban Convention, and to achieve its important objectives.