



DELEGATION OF AUSTRIA

Statement by

Ambassador

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Permanent Representative of Austria
to the Conference on Disarmament

at the
976th Plenary Meeting

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you for the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to convey my best wishes to you for this difficult task. I would also like to express my gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Chris Sanders, who has spared no effort to advance our common cause and bring the Conference on Disarmament back to work.

On Tuesday, March 1 the world celebrated the sixth 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.

From November 29 to December 3, 2004, I had the privilege of presiding over the Convention's First Review Conference – the Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World.

At the Nairobi Summit – whose host country Kenya has already addressed the CD a few weeks ago – the international community gathered at a high political level to examine the humanitarian problems caused by anti-personnel mines and what is being done to address them. The Nairobi-Summit accomplished two objectives: first, it took stock of what has been achieved so far and second it defined a forward-looking action plan.

Indeed, we can celebrate considerable progress.

The use of anti-personnel mines has been markedly reduced in recent years. Fewer anti-personnel mines are being produced and trade with this perilous weapon has almost completely ceased.

144 states have ratified the Convention since 1997 including the majority of those states that are most heavily affected by landmines, such as Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Mozambique and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Convention has established an international standard, which is also respected by the majority of those states that have not yet joined this important humanitarian instrument.

In addition, the States Parties to the Convention have destroyed more than 37 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines and cleared vast tracks of mined land. The annual number of new mine victims is now significantly lower than it once used to be and many landmine survivors are now receiving better care and assistance.

However, much still needs to be done. To overcome the remaining challenges, the States Parties to the Convention adopted what was the center-piece of the Nairobi Summit – the *Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009*. We agreed on 70 concrete actions including the following:

- We concluded that **universal adherence** to the Convention will remain an important priority during the period 2005-2009: 50 states, including 22 members of the CD, have not yet formally joined the Convention and I call upon these States to join the Convention as soon as possible.
- We acknowledged that the most significant challenge for the next 5 years will be to make sure that States Parties **meet the 10-year mine-clearance**

deadlines for clearing mined areas. This will require intensive efforts by mine-affected States Parties and those in a position to assist them.

- We recommitted ourselves to provide for the care, rehabilitation and reintegration of **mine victims**.
- We agreed that the **destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines** – one of the Convention's true success stories – will remain a key priority: While only 15 States Parties must still destroy stockpiles, some of them still have substantial stocks.
- Finally, we accepted that fulfilling our obligations during the period 2005-2009 will require substantial **political, financial and material commitments**. While over 2.7 billion USD have been generated since 1997 for efforts that are consistent with the Convention's aims, considerable additional resources are still required to finish the job.

Mr. President, in many instances, mine action needs to be identified as a priority in development plans, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, and UN Development Assistance Frameworks. And, mine action needs to be made more efficient and effective.

In sum, the Nairobi Action Plan lays out a comprehensive framework to achieve our goal of conclusively ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines – for all people for all time.

The remarkable success of the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention shows that multilateralism can yield results if it is done with a clear focus and in a cooperative spirit. The Ottawa Convention presents solutions to the landmine problem that are relevant for all states, including those with great means and those with few. And the Convention provides a forum that it is open to all States.

In concluding, Mr. President, let me express my hope that also the Conference on Disarmament, which has been in abeyance for too long now, will soon start to also profit from such a co-operative spirit in order to move forward the important work that needs to be done on the issues of the FMCT, Nuclear Disarmament, PAROS and Negative Security Assurances.

In this understanding, let me assure you, Mr. President, of Austria's full support in assisting you to carry out your duties.

Thank you very much.