

STATEMENT

BY

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**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA TO
THE UNITED NATIONS**

**DURING THE 976th PLENARY OF THE
CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT**

**GENEVA
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Mr. President,

Allow me to take this opportunity on behalf of the Kenya delegation to congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament for the month of February 2005.

I have every confidence in your ability to steer the work of the conference to a success.

It is our hope that under your presidency we shall be able to actualize some of the steps initiated by your predecessor, Amb. Chris Saunders of the Netherlands so that the Conference can embark on substantive negotiations that has eluded it for eight years.

On 27 January I made a statement on behalf of Ambassador Amina Mohamed in which I gave a report on the Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World, which we had the privilege to host in Nairobi from 29 November to 3 December 2004.

Today I wish to join the speakers before me to mark the 6th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention as we look forward to overcoming the challenges that remain.

Kenya is one of 49 African states with a dual responsibility on the question of eradication of landmines: Accordingly:-

- We must implement the Nairobi Action Plan, which was adopted by the Convention's States Parties in Nairobi on 3 December 2004.
- And, we must persistently apply the Common African Position on Anti-Personnel Mines, which was adopted by African Ministers of Foreign Affairs on 23 September 2004.

The Nairobi Action Plan to implement the Convention and the African Common Position are complementary, given that the latter is an African manifestation of the pursuit of the aims of the Ottawa Convention.

The African Common Position clearly highlights our continent's challenges in ending, for all people and for all time, the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines.

A number of concrete steps need to be taken to:

- universalize the Ottawa Convention in Africa and elsewhere;
- assist the African States Parties in fulfilling their obligations to destroy stockpiles within their four-year deadlines, and to develop

- and implement national demining programmes with the view to meeting their ten-year mine clearance deadlines;
- enhance the assistance provided to mine victims and to provide for their social and economic reintegration;
 - promote and develop Inter-African cooperation and Africa's capacity in the field of mine clearance and mine victim assistance; and,
 - mobilize the international community in support of the continent's efforts.

Seven (7) African states are still in the process of destroying stockpiled mines.¹

Nine (9) African states have deadlines for clearance that will become due in 2009², approximately coinciding with the Convention's Second Review Conference.

And eleven (11) States Parties on the African continent have the responsibility for significant numbers – hundreds of thousands – of landmine survivors.³

Kenya is confident that, in the context of both the Nairobi Action Plan and the Common African Position, African states will seize their responsibilities to develop national implementation plans and identify internal measures to implement these plans.

We hope that all other states in a position to do so will respond to the African initiative by providing the necessary support and in a manner consistent with identified national priorities.

It is important that we share with the Conference on Disarmament this sense of commitment on the part of African States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, considering that many of the affected African states are not members of this august body.

Let us not forget that conventional weapons can affect all peoples in all countries. Therefore it is essential that all interested states have the opportunity to assemble as equal partners to discuss the solutions to the problems caused by landmines and other conventional weapons. And it is equally essential that the solutions developed – like those contained in the Ottawa Convention – are meaningful to all states, irrespective of the means they have at their disposal.

¹ Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau and Sudan.

² Chad, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, Swaziland, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

³ Angola, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Senegal, Sudan and Uganda.

I cannot conclude without a word on the important question of universalization of the Convention which we have addressed ourselves to on a number of occasions in this Conference.

As we mark the 6th anniversary of the Convention, let us seize this opportunity to remind those states that are still outside the Convention that their concerns can be addressed within the Convention. We appeal to Non-States Parties not only to embrace its noble principles – which many of them seem to share – but to take the courage to join the Convention.

With the necessary goodwill and in the spirit of multilateralism, their concerns can be addressed without sacrificing the fundamental principles that the States Parties have agreed upon. We owe it to humanity to rid every corner of the globe the menace of anti-personnel landmines.

In this regard, allow me to recall the words of H.E. President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya in his address at the opening session of the High Level Segment of the Review Conference in Nairobi on 2nd December 2004.

He said, and I quote:-

"Certainly, if small states can eliminate these weapons from their arsenals, there is no justification for the mighty and powerful states and those with sophisticated weapons to continue clinging to them."

It is our hope that this clear and powerful message from Nairobi will elicit positive responses.

I thank you.