



NAIROBI SUMMIT ON A MINE-FREE WORLD
Statement by Ambassador Antonio Jose Resende de Castro
Head of the Brazilian Delegation
Nairobi, December 3, 2004

Mister President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Brazil wants to express its appreciation to President Mwai Kibaki, kind host of this Summit, and the people of Kenya for their warm hospitality during our stay in this wonderful country. I wish to thank, also, Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch, for the experienced and skillful guidance of the works of this meeting, which allowed us to adopt, at its conclusion, important documents that will guide the actions of the international community in the following years.

Mister President,

The Convention against Antipersonnel Mines is a unique international instrument that allowed us, by the integration of different perspectives, to tackle in a comprehensive manner a complex issue. Its objective is to completely ban a category of weapons, whose military utility is largely outweighed by its cruel and indiscriminate impact on civilian populations, therefore we could assume it is a convention on disarmament. Nonetheless, it contains important elements that clearly establish its humanitarian character, once it determines, among others, the obligation for Member States to assist the victims of such weapons. We can affirm that the Convention, since its entry into force, has already attained remarkable results in its two main areas: disarmament and humanitarian assistance.

Such positive outcomes can only be explained by the existence of a powerful political will, stimulated by organized civil society, as well as by the development of important and effective mechanisms of cooperation and assistance.

Much has been done, but there is still a long way ahead. The 144 Members of the Convention have to look towards the future and renew their efforts and commitments in order to better face the challenges ahead.

However, the achievements reached up to this moment should not be used as excuses for complacency, or worst, for inaction. On the contrary, those achievements must be seen as a minimum standard that we have to overrun. All States-Parties, from those who donate financial resources and technical expertise to those which have the primary responsibility for demining and victim assistance, must renew and enhance their efforts in order to turn 2009 into a landmark of accomplishment, instead of disappointment.

In this context, the main goal that has to be persecuted as a matter of absolute priority is the one of universalization. It is necessary that the main producers and possessors of antipersonnel landmines adhere to the Convention. We acknowledge with satisfaction that many among them already abide by its fundamental principles, by means of voluntary and unilateral moratoria of antipersonnel landmine production, transfer or use. Nevertheless, such initiatives do not provide sufficient assurances to the international community. In times of a fluid global strategic scenario, the only minimally acceptable

assurance is the one that derives from legally binding commitments. Without which, any results that we aspire to achieve in the realm of disarmament are doomed to be incomplete.

For this reason, we salute Ethiopia as the newest member of the Convention, and at the same time we urge those States not yet parties to the Mine-Ban Treaty to adhere to it, and fully integrate themselves to our efforts.

Mister President,

Brazil has given permanent proof of its unequivocal commitment to the Convention. We completed the destruction of our antipersonnel landmine stockpile in January 2003. We adopted Federal Act number 10300, which establishes penal sanctions for acts that violate the prohibitions of the Convention. Fortunately, neither Brazil nor its 13 neighbors, which share a border of more than 8.000 kilometers with us, have felt the need to resort to landmines as defensive means against each other. As a result, there are no areas contaminated by landmines within or next to our borders.

Brazil confers special attention to cooperation and assistance under the aegis of article 6 of the Convention, which for us is one of its fundamental pillars. In this context, Brazil is a major contributor to OAS' humanitarian demining missions in our brother countries in Central America, Ecuador and Peru. The experience acquired in the course of such missions, as well as the high training standards of Brazilian officers, enables us to extend and to enhance our cooperation with affected countries.

In the course of the debates held in this Conference, it was clear for all of us that the numerous challenges foreseen for the few years that separate us from deadline 2009 will only be overcome if all States contribute with all means available for each one of them. But it is also clear that such means must necessarily be utilized in a coordinated and rational way, so as to keep inefficiency, redundancy and bureaucratic impediments from introducing a barrier between the words we have heard and the actions we expect for the future. We need new and creative mechanisms that allow for the better combination of different national capabilities of States-Parties, so as to help affected countries to attain the goals established by the Convention and to free their peoples from the pain and fear imposed by antipersonnel landmines.

Mr. President,

Brazil congratulates itself for the positive results of this first Review Conference. We did not only reaffirm the need for the persistence and enhancement of the spirit of cooperation that has been the distinctive trait of this Convention, but also adopted an ambitious plan of action that will guide us in the next years. No less important than this is the vehement and unconditional condemnation of any use of antipersonnel landmines by any actor, be it a State or not.

To conclude, Mr. President, I cannot refrain from noting the recognition, included in the Nairobi Declaration, of the Mine-Ban Treaty as "an example and inspiration for addressing other humanitarian, development and disarmament challenges". This observation induces us to reflect on the future of disarmament in general. Essential to the success of this Convention have been the enthusiasm and activism demonstrated by international civil society, that helped to develop a strong popular rejection of antipersonnel landmines, which, combined with the commitment and cooperation among States, has led to its effective prohibition. Brazil would like to see the same enthusiasm, activism, commitment and cooperation among States and the international civil society in the struggle against other cruel and inhumane weapons with indiscriminate and persistent effects, especially nuclear weapons. We currently stand on a particularly favorable juncture to renew our efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament, as we approach the 6th Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to be held in New York next year.

Thank you, Mr. President.

