

**First Review Conference on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,
Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on their
Destruction
(Nairobi, 29 November – 3 December 2004)**

Statement of Poland

Mr. President,

Let me first join – those who have spoken before me – in congratulating the presidency of the Nairobi Summit, for an excellent organization of this meeting as well as in thanking the Government and People of Kenya for their hospitality.

Poland fully subscribes to the statement made by the Netherlands Presidency of the European Union. I would like to mention just a few elements that Poland considers important from our national perspective.

Poland endorses the ideas on which the Ottawa process is founded. We signed the Mine Ban Treaty as early as December 1997. We have been always acting according to its provisions.

I have an honour and a pleasure to announce that the Republic of Poland is ready to initiate the process of ratification of the Ottawa Convention.

The role of antipersonnel mines in the Polish defense system has been recently comprehensively reviewed and redefined. Polish Army experts came to the conclusion that there are no obstacles to resign from this type of military equipment. It is also possible from a technical and financial point of view to provide the Army with an alternative weapon systems.

Although not all of the preconditions for the ratification specified by Poland in 1997 are fulfilled, we hope that in the future all main state actors and our neighbors will join this treaty of the international humanitarian law.

At the same time, Poland represents a view that the success of the Ottawa Convention should not be measured only in terms of the number of States Parties. We are convinced that the Convention provides a good

framework for a ban of a political character, and also the principles of de-mining and survivor assistance.

Poland has already, partially implemented the Ottawa Convention. We are complying with the prohibition on production and transfer of anti personal mines (APM). Since 2003, Poland has also voluntarily submitted its national reports to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as stipulated in Article 7 of the Ottawa Convention. The Polish stocks of antipersonnel mines are being reduced, since a part of them is routinely decommissioned and dismantled after their life cycle had expired. In 2003, the number was close to 60,000 (sixty thousands).

Poland has always been supportive of the international community's efforts to deliver assistance to post-conflict recovery areas while contributing troops, including a substantial number of de-miner units to peacekeeping missions. This policy will be maintained.

For the last 5 years more than 700 Polish de-miners have been involved in numerous international operations. At present 235 of the Polish Engineering Forces personnel are engaged in various peacekeeping and stabilizing missions abroad. Additional to their mandatory tasks the personnel acts in favour of local populations. The activities include among others removing and destroying of the explosives remnants of war in cases of emergency, as well as providing warning and risk education to the affected communities. Only in 2003, our direct involvement in mine clearance operations has been estimated to be about 0.9 mln Euro (nine hundred thousands).

Poland also favours the initiatives in this field set out by the EU and the EAPC. We were politically and financially engaged in two projects within the framework of the PfP NATO Trust Fund concerning the destruction of stockpiles of APM in Ukraine and Moldova.

Universalisation and full implementation of this international norm remains an uphill task. We believe that this process of the universalisation of the Convention would also serve to enhance transparency, build confidence and promote better understanding among states.

Thank you for your attention.