

Statement by Ambassador Agnes Kalibala, Uganda's Deputy High Commissioner to Kenya at the First Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Ant-personnel mines and on their Destruction, Nairobi Kenya, 2 December 2004

Mr. President,

Allow me on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, to congratulate you for the excellent and exemplary manner in which you have steered this Review Conference.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the government of Kenya for hosting this Summit and for the hospitality extended to my delegation since we arrived in this beautiful city of Nairobi.

Mr. President,

This Review Conference has noted with satisfaction the major achievements of the past five years since the signing of the Mines Convention. My delegation is pleased with the progress so far, towards compliance to the treaty obligations. A number of states have ratified the Convention. States have reported increased mine action activities and reduced use, sell and transfer of anti personnel mines since the treaty came into forth. There has been a noticeable increase in funding and support for mine action.

My delegation considers this review report as the true reflection of the status of the Convention and, therefore, fully endorses the report that is due for adoption.

Mr. President,

Uganda welcomes Ethiopia for ratifying the Convention. This again is a clear testimony of the increasing support of the Convention by State Parties. We call upon other state parties that have not done so to ratify the Convention and join efforts to make this world a safer place.

Mr. President,

While the Review Report presents the achievements that are a cause for optimism, it also highlights considerable challenges that must be addressed. I wish to remind ourselves to the opening Ceremony

where we had the opportunity to hear the untold story of the effects of landmines, this time from the victims themselves. It was quite clear from their testimonies that although a lot has been achieved, more remains to be done. Across the world many mine infested areas remain to be surveyed and cleared of mines. Assistance to mine victims remains unsatisfactory and many victims cannot access any support to enable them live a normal life.

Mr. President,

As one of the original signatories of the Convention and having ratified it in February 1999, Uganda has made significant progress since 2000 in conforming to the norms of the Convention. For example, the sole mines producing factory at Nakasongola was decommissioned and inspected by resident foreign military advisors in July 2001. In July 2003, Uganda destroyed over 6000 anti-personnel mines. Uganda remains committed to the collection of the mines still scattered particularly in the northern part of the country.

As a result of conflict and external unrest in the region, Uganda has unquantified land mine problem. Although the problem has been documented no official survey has been conducted to ascertain the extent and scale of contamination.

The critical challenge for Uganda, however, is how to deal with the continued mine usage by the rebels of the Lords Resistance Army in Northern Uganda. Systematic mine clearance is problematic particularly due to the sporadic use by the rebels. These mines pose a very serious threat to the resettlement of the internally displaced people in the event of cessation of conflict.

In this regard Uganda looks forward to an international mechanism that can be used to bring non-state actors such as the LRA to account in accordance with this Conference objective of universalisation of the Convention.

Mr. President,

My delegation welcomes and reaffirms that the Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009 presents a comprehensive framework for mine action for the next five years. My delegation reiterates total commitment to fully follow and implement this plan.

In this regard, Uganda is in the process of developing a national strategy that will address mines survey, mine risk education, victim assistance and national mine action coordination structure. Uganda welcomes support from the international community to enable the implementation of its national strategy.

I thank you Mr. President.