

NAIROBI SUMMIT ON A MINE-FREE WORLD
28 November-3 December 2004

**STATEMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS WORLD FOOD
PROGRAMME (WFP)**

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to participate in this review conference on a mine free world and reinforce WFP's position on Mine Action. WFP's involvement in Mine Action stems from our mandate to provide food aid in humanitarian emergencies. Through our operations and our role as the frontline UN agency against hunger, WFP is frequently faced with challenges that prevent us from accessing our beneficiaries; anti personnel, landmines and UXOs represent such a challenge. Mines are present in 58 countries that WFP has food programmes.

In many countries, mines and UXOs prevent WFP and other agencies from reaching people in need. Mines prevent our trucks from reaching our beneficiaries, and they increase the cost of delivering food by forcing us to use costly airlifts, which reduces the funds available for food itself.

Mines and UXOs represent serious threats to civilians and regions because they remain long after the conflict has ended, denying the use of vast areas of valuable land, overloading the health care system as a result of the horrific injuries they are responsible for, causing insecurity, and hindering foreign investment and development. Despite the 1999 *Ottawa Treaty on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction*, the use of mines continues in many countries and conflicts. While mines are cheap to produce, removing them is not only costly, but also slow and hazardous. In addition, there are often no maps or records which detail where mines have been distributed.

It is therefore important that, in addition to mine clearance & mine surveys, mine awareness and education is undertaken to help people recognize potentially dangerous areas and avoid them.

WFP has an Operational Framework for Mine Action which enables us to deliver food aid to needy people in mine affected areas. We have a dedicated Stand-By Partner, Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD) which can be deployed rapidly for the purpose of undertaking surveys and clearing roads, bridges and warehouses, enabling WFP and other humanitarian agencies to reach people in need.

WFP would also like to congratulate those countries that had the courage and the foresight to sign this Convention. WFP remains a partner to all those who work to reduce the threat of mines and UXOs in our world.

Mr President ladies and gentlemen thank you for your attention.

ENDS