

Statement by H.E. Mr. Gábor Bródi  
Deputy Secretary of State  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Hungary  
At the  
First Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention  
Nairobi December 01 2004

Mr. President! Ladies and Gentlemen!

First of all, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate to you for leading this Conference so successfully. I also want to express my gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Kenya for being an excellent host of this important event.

Hungary fully subscribes to the statement made by the Nederland's Presidency of the European Union. We support the common assistance activities of the European Union, like its "European Roadmap to a Zero Victim Target" strategy for the years 2005-07, to which my country is ready and willing to contribute.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the First Review Conference for the entire international community. The Ottawa Convention has become one of the most successful international instruments in the field of global disarmament since 1999. Its history has proved that with the co-operation of governmental and non-governmental organizations, with the involvement of the civil society and professional bodies, an important initiative can be successful within a relatively short period of time.

The sheer number of 37 million landmines destroyed since 1999 commands respect. By now, 144 States Parties work together for our common goal. I feel it symbolic that the State Party to join just recently, Ethiopia, is an African country with an especially difficult historic background. In my view this proves that the Ottawa Convention can contribute to conflict resolution and conflict management even in the most problematic regions of our planet. We do hope that shortly the number of States Parties will further increase and will include also those States whose participation would be indispensable in the process leading to a mine-free world.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Hungary attaches great importance to the efforts being exercised against the use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of anti-personnel mines and to their destruction. We are all too well aware of the dangers of these dreadful weapons and of the immeasurable suffering they have brought about to millions of people, military and civilian, on four continents. This is the reason why we think that victim-assistance is becoming one of the leading purposes of our concerted efforts.

We have witnessed the devastation caused by these treacherous weapons from a close range, in our neighbourhood, during the war in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. This is why Hungary considers regional co-operation so important and why it is ready to facilitate this co-operation.

Mr. President!

As it is well known, Hungary was among the first States to join the Ottawa Convention and to ratify it in 1998. As an obligation to each State Party, Hungary has destroyed its entire stockpile of anti-personnel mines by the year 1999. In the same year, Hungary has served as co-chair in the De-mining Committee of the Ottawa Convention. In February 2001 Hungary and Canada co-organized a seminar on the destruction of PFM-1 mines in Budapest.

Since 1999 my country has been providing financial assistance for land mine destruction and de-mining activities each consecutive year. This assistance has reached various countries in need, including Afghanistan, where we participated in maintaining hospitals in 2003. Hungary also supported the Executive Branch of the Geneva ICHD. The Hungarian support provided for the purposes of the Ottawa Convention amount to 240.000 USD in the given period of time.

Beyond the assistance provided in a bilateral manner, we have used our opportunities also in the framework of multinational efforts. We have joined e.g. into projects of the NATO Partnership for Peace Trust Fund. In this framework, Hungarian experts succeeded to destroy 400.000 land mines in the Ukraine in May 2003, making it possible for one of our neighbours and a country playing an important role in the region, to fulfil its obligations to become a State Party to the Convention as soon as possible.

Mr. President!

The Action Plan to be approved by States Parties as a conclusion of the First Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention is ambitious but I am convinced that its purposes can be achieved. The international community needs to perform concerted efforts in the fields of destruction of stockpiled mines, minefield clearing and victim assistance as well as the involvement of some important States not yet Parties to this Convention, to assure that our final goal of a mine-free world is fulfilled. I do believe that the First Review Conference is a very important step in this direction.

I thank you, Mr. President.