

Angola

Your Excellency President of the Republic of Kenya

Delegation

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with greatest satisfaction that on behalf of my Government, my own behalf and of course my delegation that we here participating in this First Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention.

This Conference is taking place in a particular difficult moment for Africa where we watch different conflicts that continue mutilating and killing innocent people.

For these reason, this Conference has particular meaning especially for African countries considering that 110 millions of landmines are implanted in more than 70 countries worldwide, more than 30 millions are in Africa and in more than 30 countries respectively.

The lives of millions of African families living in mined affected countries, has become a burden, increasing poverty, misery and dependency, in which many still live under a dollar per day.

Besides the negative impact on the lives of the populations, mines still constitutes a supplementary threat to socio-economic, and cultural development, as well as the security and political stability for African countries, in particular those engaged in the fight for national reconstruction after long years of armed conflicts.

Mr. President

It is not big news that Angola continues to be one of the most mined countries in the world, where we watch on a daily basis the death and mutilation of many Angolans.

It has been more than 2 years that my country lives a climate of peace, although millions of existing anti-personnel and anti-tank mines do not understand this language and continue to take the

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lives of many Angolans, preventing the socio-economic development to take place particularly in rural communities, where we see poverty that brings about traumas and frustrations to society.

Mines and explosive ordinance not detonated, have become the violators of three human rights – the civic and political rights of an Angolan citizen, the cultural and socio-economic rights of our people and the right towards development of our country, recognized by United nations charter and by the human rights declaration.

Demining constitutes a priority to my government as it is reflected in the Government Action Programme recently approved on the Strategy to Fight Poverty, as well as within United Nations Development Programme.

Your Excellency Mr. President

Followed the process of administrative decentralization in the country, mine action coordination also involves provincial governments, who have been establishing priorities of intervention in close consultation with partners. This work had resulted in the elaboration of Provincial Mine Action Plans 2005 and, its consolidation towards the National Mine Action Plan 2005.

The Plan is essentially directed to activities which will first enable the resettlement and reintegration and sustainable subsistence of the population, to improve access to vital natural resources, social basic services and promote income generating activities and at the same time reduce the numbers of accidents and mine related damages.

It is important to underline that in my country, anti-personnel and anti-tank mines together with other explosive ordinance have constituted lately a big concern, since it becomes difficult to remove them, just to give an example that only in this trimester

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19 anti-personnel mines caused 19 injuries and 14 deaths, 12 anti-tank mines caused 39 injuries and 26 deaths. The techniques utilized in Angola for mine detection have shown to be inadequate, for this reason, we appeal to Donor countries so that they can help us introduce new detection technologies in Angola, so as to locate and classify mine fields so as to locate mine fields and reduce drastically the elevated number of mines in Angola.

Due to the fact that the majority of the country does not have any location map, a socio-economic evaluation impact of Mine Contamination is now going on in the country near the communities will constitute a very important information source to determine the real situation of mine impact in the country, this national survey will allow to determine possible scenarios of the problem of mine contamination in the territory.

Your Excellency

Mine Action programme in Angola, has been counting on the support of donors especially the European Commission, United States of America, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Holland, United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and Japan. Many contributions have been directly made to specialized NGOs and / or channelled through projects of reinforcement of Institutional capacity through United Nation System in Angola.

The biggest challenges are not placed upon the amount of financial contributions but mainly on the level of deep cooperation, in such way to obtain a more adequate response, to have more impact and promote an efficient use of available resources.

Your Excellency Mr. President

I would like to reassure that my government is seriously committed in fulfilling the Ottawa Convention signed on the 4th December 1997 and ratified stored on 5th July 2002, in this perspective has been seeking to fulfil in an scrupulous manner with the obligation of the convention as equally taken various

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regional initiatives, Continental and diplomatic initiatives aiming at the universalization of the Convention, as a prove of what we have just affirmed very recently in New York a Forum on the most affected countries in the world by mines "FOMACO", in which Angola has been indicated to coordinate in a meeting which counted on the participation of Permanent Representatives together with United Nations.

This initiative was forwarded by Angola in coordination with UNDP Mine Action Division, This Forum has as its objective to promote co-operation, mainly on the exchange of experiences of demining programmes between its members in the ambit of mine action and other explosive ordinance, including the need to focus on mine actions in its different aspects, both at humanitarian domain, development and national reconstruction.

We still defend, the idea that the Forum will serve as a desirable model of cooperation south-south among the most affected countries by mines, United Nations, and Donor Community and Civil Society.

Your Excellency

Regardless the insurmountable difficulties which the country encounters result of the long years of war the country has suffered, the Government of Angola is very much concerned on the situation of mine victims which unfortunately amounted to 80.000, in this sense the Government has launched a challenge within the juridical-legal framework in favour of mine victims and other disabled people, aiming at ensuring their rights of citizenship as well as to have access to health, education, employment, sports and leisure, etc, based on the sacred principles by the United nations namely on the universality, rights to equal opportunities etc, greatest strategic options were defined.

Therefore, projects and laws that aim at protecting and safeguard the rights of disabled were created in order to decrease the immense difficulties these people suffer. It is evident that the

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Government alone will not be able to carry out this great task, which is why we call upon humanitarian institution to help us achieve this goal in order to ensure a dignifying life to mine victims.

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Finally Mr. President I would once again take this opportunity to congratulate the people and government of Kenya for the beautiful organization and hospitality that was reserved to us, and I would equally congratulate the President-Designate for having conducted brilliantly the work of this First Review Conference of Ottawa Convénition.

We are convinced that this Conference will also serve to re-think on the Convention adjusting it to the reality as well as to create mechanisms to its enhancement.

I Thank You

Mr. President