



**Statement of His Excellency Sok An  
Deputy Prime Minister,  
Minister in Charge of the Office of Council of Ministers  
Royal Government of Cambodia  
and  
Vice President of the Cambodian Mine Action and  
Victim Assistance Authority**

**At the Nairobi Summit  
First Review Conference of the  
Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling  
and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and  
on Their Destruction.**

**High Level Segment - December 2, 2004**

**Nairobi, Kenya**

*President Wolfgang Pretrisch;*  
*Excellencies;*  
*Distinguished Delegates;*

On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, allow me first to congratulate and thank the Government of Kenya for hosting and organizing this very important First Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

We believe that this First Review Conference will serve not only to enhance a more secure world through the destruction of landmines, but will also promote human dignity through the clearance of mines, provision of human assistance to mine victims and help reduce poverty.

Mr. President:

The Kingdom of Cambodia is one of the most landmine affected countries in the world, due to almost three decades of conflict and several years of aerial bombing and shelling. The problem is so severe that the rural poor's access to essential facilities such as water, roads, bridges and cultivable land is seriously restricted. According to our impact survey, 1,640 communities have to cope with high levels of contamination. It is sad to report that even though the casualty rates are dropping, they are still over 800 per year since 2000, and this is still one of the highest casualty rates in the world.

We gather here today with a common objective, which is to create a world free from landmines.

Through these past 10 years of effort, we have drawn considerable experiences and good lessons in mine action through the Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC) and the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA). Now we can assess their strengths and weaknesses, as well as the challenges we face. We will consider measures for action aimed at further

accelerating the current momentum; - so that we can steadily and productively move forward.

The Royal Government has recently adopted the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs), where Goal 9 stipulates that...;

*“the Medium Term Vision is to move towards zero impact from land mines by 2012, in order to alleviate poverty and to sustain development, as ensured by clearing all severe and high impact suspected mined areas; developing intensive mine risk education for all suspected areas with mines.*

To this end, the Royal Government has developed a Five Year Action Plan for a period 2005-2009 to implement Article 5 of the Ottawa Convention. Our main goals are: to reduce the effects of landmines on poverty and specifically livelihoods of those living in mined affected areas; to mainstream mine clearance in national development planning; to reduce the negative impact of landmines on the achievement of national development goals, objectives and targets; and last but not least to ensure the rehabilitation and integration of landmine victims in mainstream society.

I wish to emphasize that the Royal Government of Cambodia always considers the country's mine action as a top priority for its rehabilitation and development. We recognise that mine clearance is not just an issue of security, but it involves major socio-economic and development impacts as well, especially regarding the provision of land and safety for the poor farming families in remote, rural areas.

In November 2003 the National Poverty Reduction Strategy was updated to include mine action.

In order to implement such policy, on 17 October 2004, in its full meeting, the Council of Ministers has adopted a Sub-decree, entitled "Socio-Economic Management of Mine Clearance Operations". The Sub-decree directs all Governors of mine affected provinces to establish a Provincial Mine Action Committee, and thereafter a permanent technical team called a Mine Action

Planning Unit (MAPU), which will be strengthened through the enhanced participation of all key ministries and stakeholders.

The MAPU will be the provincial technical support team ensuring that the provincial priorities are integrated in the national mine action plan, and that national mine action priorities are addressed in a coordinated manner. The national priorities will need to distinguish between the clearance of severely mined villages with high level of casualties, and mine clearance to enable agriculture or infrastructure development, such as roads and electric power lines, or the demining of historical or tourist sites to promote income generation.

Mr. President,

To conclude, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia I wish to reassure you of our commitment and determination to promote the universal acceptance of the Ottawa Convention. The success of this First Review Conference of the States Parties is indeed dependent upon every one of us. The Royal Government of Cambodia looks forward to working with you throughout the next five years in the spirit of cooperation, friendship and partnership toward a safer world, which our children and grand children can run and play without fear.

Thank you for your kind attention.