

LESOTHO

**THE FIRST REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE  
CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE,  
STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER  
OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON  
THEIR DESTRUCTION**

**STATEMENT BY  
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**Nairobi, Kenya  
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Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to add <sup>the</sup> voice of my delegation to those of previous speakers, in registering our appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Kenya for hosting the First Review Conference of the Ottawa Treaty in this Beautiful City of Nairobi. To my delegation, this is a clear demonstration of <sup>the</sup> commitment by Kenya and indeed Africa as a whole, to rid itself and the world of anti-personnel mines/which have caused untold suffering and misery to many, especially innocent civilians.

My delegation further congratulates you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the Presidency of this Conference of the State Parties, and express our confidence that, under your able leadership, this Conference will realize the goals it has set forth to achieve.

Mr. President,

The holding of the First Review Conference of the Ottawa Treaty is an opportunity of taking stock of our successes and challenges in the implementation of the Treaty. Indeed this Conference, represents a crucial milestone in measuring progress towards the goal of a world free of anti-personnel mines.

Mr. President,

It is five years since the Treaty came into force, but enormous efforts are still needed to reduce and eventually to rid the world of the terrible humanitarian burden of anti-personnel mines. This is shown by the fact that, even though there is remarkable progress towards universal adherence with <sup>143</sup> States Parties, 48 of which are African States, 51 states have still not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention.

There is still need, therefore, to advocate universal adherence to the Convention and encourage those still outside its jurisdiction to join us in this long and difficult road to a mine free world.

Mr. President,

My delegation notes tangible results that have been realized since the entry into force of this Treaty.

To date, at least 37 million mines have been destroyed, there are 124 State Parties which no longer have stock of mines in their arsenals, and <sup>of those</sup> 40 are African.

As we celebrate these successes on the implementation of the Convention, we are able to echo with a degree of confidence that indeed an international norm is being created, in that even States which are not parties to the Convention are heeding the call.

There are still challenges facing us as a collective in our endeavours to eliminate these weapons.

Mr. President, we need to focus on efforts to assist victims of anti-personnel mines, in order to free them from the trauma. This we can achieve through medical assistance, but it is my delegation's belief that more emphasis could be on psychological support and social reintegration of the victims.

Mr. President,

The treaty advocates for the complete elimination of mines within ten years of its entry into force. This has been a major problem particularly for the poorest countries due to lack of resources especially within the African continent. This has negative impact on Africa's efforts to embark on an Africa Free of Landmines' Plan of Action. These poor countries are not even able to comply with the treaty's time frame much as there is demonstrable political will to comply. Lesotho, therefore calls for the review of the Treaty, particularly article 5 paragraph 3. The understanding and cooperation of all States Parties is necessary here. This goes hand in glove with provision of more resources.

Africa has been ravaged by the effects of this perverse weapon. There is a need for those sister countries which were involved in laying these anti-personnel mines to take the responsibility and, assist with resources to be used in the clearance of mined areas.

It is becoming common knowledge, Mr. President, that Lesotho is among the few countries that have not been affected by the scourge of land-mines.

Lesotho does not use, buy or manufacture land-mines. Neither do we have any stockpiles of mines even just for training purposes. Nonetheless, Lesotho remains committed to its obligations as stipulated in the Convention. Through her National Committee of International Humanitarian Law, Lesotho will soon embark on the process of drafting the enabling legislation in order that the Convention, may become part of our National Laws.

We therefore believe that concerted efforts should continue to be taken to reduce the impact of landmine use on civilians. It is our considered view, that over and above being inherently indiscriminate, and therefore in violation of the principle of proportionality under international humanitarian law, even the short term military benefits of landmines are far outweighed by their long term human and socio-economic cost.

Mr. President,

My delegation wishes to commend the work and accomplishments made by the inter-sessional working groups in their co-ordinating efforts towards the universalization of the Convention. Their efforts are bearing fruit. There is an increase in ratifications or

accessions to the Convention and indeed also voluntary compliance even by non-State Parties.

It is through the efforts of these working groups that global stocks are destroyed in the fastest, most cost effective way, and with the least harmful effects to the environment.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Lesotho will continue tirelessly to add her voice within her own region, SADC, the rest of Africa as well as the whole world, to the voices of decency that strive to end the use of anti personnel mines. Let us all destroy any stockpiles, clear mined areas, and assist victims to reclaim their lives with dignity. Let us also cease any further development, production and transfer of these inhumane weapons of indiscriminate destruction.

Let us, in this Conference, honestly acknowledge the pitfalls and celebrate the successes on the implementation of the Ottawa Treaty. Let us take this opportunity to renew our commitment and embark on a “World Free from Landmines” campaign. What remains a great challenge is the need for resources to attain this goal. But together we can attain that noble goal!

I thank you for your attention.