

TOWARDS A MINE-FREE WORLD

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY HIS EXCELLENCY
DR. BINGU wa MUTHARIKA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI
AT THE NAIROBI MINE-FREE WORLD SUMMIT**

29TH NOVEMBER TO 3RD DECEMBER, 2004

Your Excellency Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya;

Your Excellencies, the Heads of State and Government;

Chairman of the First Review Conference, Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch of Austria;

Secretary-General of the Conference, Ms Esther Thole;

~~**Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan;**~~

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my singular honour to address 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, which is being held here in Nairobi, Kenya.

May I take this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to my dear brother and our host His Excellency Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya for extending an invitation to me to attend this very

important Conference, and to the government and people of the Republic of Kenya for the warm and friendly hospitality they have accorded to my delegation.

I also recognise the professional and able leadership by which Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch has organized the deliberations of this Conference. I am optimistic that the outcome of the Conference will be tangible and meaningful in the attainment of the Convention's Core humanitarian objectives of universalising the Convention, clearing mined areas, destroying stockpiled mines and victim assistance.

Your Excellencies

My government is gratified to learn that since the entry into force of the Mine Ban Treaty in 1999, there are ¹⁴³~~142~~ countries that have become parties to the Convention. On the other hand, Malawi has observed with great concern that there are 52 States and armed non-State actors that have not yet acceded to this Convention. It is even more worrisome to note that they possess very huge stockpiles of

anti-personnel mines. It is my hope and prayer that these countries would join the rest of us to work towards the complete destruction of the land mines and other related dangerous ordinances.

I urge all the Member States of the United Nations family and international organisations involved in the campaign to ban landmines to double their efforts to convince more of these non-State Parties and armed non-State actors to accede to the Convention so that the compliance rate should reach up to 100 percent by the deadline of 2009. We should aim at a world free of landmines and other dangerous ordinances.

Your Excellencies

Let me emphasise that Malawi has never used, nor produced, nor possessed anti-personnel mines. However, we have suffered the consequences from landmines as a result of the protracted civil war in our neighbouring country, Mozambique. We are now faced with an

unknown number of unexploded ordinances especially in the 33 defunct Malawi Young Pioneer bases and in the former 16 refugee camps in Malawi.

Your Excellencies

It is very sad, indeed, to note that large amounts of landmines have been emplaced in developing countries where the majority of innocent populations are in deep poverty. Therefore, my Government wishes to condemn the continued production, distribution, sale, use, stockpiling and transfer of landmines because these lethal weapons are a danger to our people and do perpetrate poverty in many developing countries including Malawi.

Malawi therefore seeks to register that we also qualify and deserve to receive financial and technical support through Official Development Assistance (ODA) in order to help us attain the goals of being a landmine free nation.

Your Excellencies

One of the daunting challenges that this Conference is faced with is how to support landmine survivors and their families. My government has established public structures, which could help to integrate these people in our societies. This will be done by the provision of loan facilities through micro-finance projects as well as health care systems. However, due to financial and capacity limitations, my Government would welcome the support from the donor nations.

Mr President

Your Excellencies

Honourable Ministers

Distinguished Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

In conclusion, let me commend His Excellency President Mwai Kibaki for hosting this conference. I also applaud my fellow Heads of State and Governments who have

gathered here in order to give our unflinching support and commitment towards the eradication of landmines. It is my sincere conviction that as we adopt our action plans for the next five years, we should equally apply our political will to get things done.

Let us come together and join hands towards the attainment of a mine-free world.

I thank you all for your attention. May God bless you.