

MOZAMBIQUE



REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
LEONARDO SANTOS SIMÃO
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND CO-OPERATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE
AT THE FIRST REVIEW CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES
TO THE OTTAWA CONVENTION**

HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT

3RD DECEMBER, 2004

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, I would like to congratulate you upon your election as President of the First Review Conference on Prohibition of the Use, Production, Transfer and Stockpile of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction, and for the very able manner you are conducting our Summit. Let me also take this opportunity to salute the members of the Bureau for the good work they are doing. Indeed, this event is a historical occasion as it allows us to reflect upon the work done in the last five years but more importantly, identify the challenges ahead.

Likewise, my delegation wishes to pay the deserved tribute to the Government of Kenya for hosting this important Conference, which represents a crucial stage in the global efforts to eradicate the scourge of anti-personnel landmines.
Excellencies,

The successful implementation of the Convention since its entry into force in March 1999 is a unique case of sustained high spirit of cooperation that has yielded tangible results, notably in the areas of universalization, stockpile, destruction and clearing mined areas.

We must congratulate ourselves for the impressive progress made in universalizing the convention, first expressed by the number of States that have become States Parties, from 43 at the time of the First Meeting of States Parties in Maputo to the current 144 States Parties today. Secondly, progress is also measured by the significant reduction of production and trade of anti-personnel landmines. On the other hand, the number of victims of landmines is declining. Of particular significance in the process of banning landmines is the effort undertaken by the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations in engaging armed non-state actors in the global efforts of banning landmines.

Nonetheless, and despite the impressive results achieved in universalizing the Convention, a large number of States are not yet Parties to the Convention, which constitutes a daunting challenge to all of us in the universalizing efforts of the Convention.

We note with satisfaction the level of stockpile destruction attained in fulfilling article 4 obligations, given by the destruction of more than 37 million anti-personnel landmines, as one of the Convention's major achievement. My own country, Mozambique, concluded the destruction of the stockpile in February 2003, one month prior to the Convention's deadline. In the process, a total of 37.818 anti-personnel mines were destroyed. This development, accompanied by mine clearance activities, highlight the importance we all attach to freeing the world of landmines. The work undertaken in both the stockpile destruction and clearing mined areas, have impacted positively on the political atmosphere, the prevailing peace, as well as stability inside the country and in the whole of our region.

Mr. Chairman, let me take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to the international community, for the valuable multifaceted support we've been receiving to fulfill our obligations and attain national goals under the Convention. We also thank the kind words addressed to Mozambique by some delegations. Just a few days ago, we had the honor and pleasure of hosting the launching of the demining segment of ICBL 2004 Report, covering the period of 1999-2004.

The success of our demining program helped greatly in the resettlement of refugees and internal displaced persons, in the reopening or opening of health facilities, schools, sources of water, agricultural land, roads and other infrastructure, with great impact in our struggle against absolute poverty.

Excellencies,

Meeting the goal of freeing the world of anti-personnel mines requires more than just adopting a political declaration at the end of this Summit. It requires continued and sustained commitment, both political and financial, so as to ensure that mine affected states meet their ten years clearance deadline, as well as to ensure the much-needed assistance to victims of landmines.

To this end, we must remind ourselves that assisting mine victims not only goes far beyond the immediate medical assistance, but also requires sustained support throughout the years. Data collection and information systems on mine victims, by themselves, do not do much for the victims. Even after all immediate medical assistance and prosthesis are made available assisting mine victims does not stop here. Additional efforts need to be developed in order to ensure their necessary economic reintegration, as this is the ultimate goal of supporting the victims of landmines.

The challenges lying ahead of us are daunting indeed. It is imperative that we join hands and strengthen our international partnerships in the fight against the plight of landmines towards a mine free world. As it is expressed in the Common African Position on Anti-Personnel Mines, adopted by the Executive Council of the African Union, there is need to ensure the full universalization of the Anti-Personnel Mines Ban Convention, assist States-Parties concerned to fulfill their Treaty obligations in destroying stockpiles and clearing mined areas.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to renew its continued commitment to the fight against the plight of landmines and to pledge support to you Mr. President and your team on a Mine Free-World.

I thank you.