

**STATEMENT BY THE HEAD OF TANZANIA DELEGATION TO
THE FIRST REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE OTTAWA
CONVENTION, HON. PROFESSOR PHILEMON M. SARUNGI (MP),
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE AND NATIONAL SERVICE**

Your Excellency Mwai Kibaki
President of the Republic of Kenya,

Excellencies Heads of Delegations,

President of the Conference,

Honourable Ministers

Distinguished Guests,

Participants.

Mr. President,

Allow me to convey fraternal and heartfelt greetings to His Excellency President **Mwai Kibaki** of the Republic of Kenya from his dear brother His Excellency President **Benjamin William Mkapa**, President of the United Republic of Tanzania; who because of other national commitments is unable to attend this important Conference. He wishes the Conference great success.

Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset, to congratulate you on your election as President of this important Conference.

Also allow me to express our gratitude and congratulations to His Excellency President Mwai Kibaki, the people, and Government of the Republic of Kenya for hosting this review meeting.

Mr. President,

As we mark the fifth year of implementing the Ottawa Convention, we have every reason to be jubilant for the accomplishments gained. Indeed we have made some remarkable progress.

Mr. President,

Whilst applauding various achievements so far gained, we are also aware of the many challenges that have to be overcome. No doubt much remains to be done. One of these challenges facing us is the universalization of the Convention. Even though almost 75% of the world's States are parties to the Convention, we should strive to ensure that all States join us towards this noble cause of the Convention.

Mr. President,

I wish at this juncture to inform this august gathering that the United Republic of Tanzania has fully implemented its obligations as provided for under Article 4 of the Convention. The last batch of stockpiled anti-personnel mines was destroyed on 29 August 2004, nine months ahead of schedule. I am proud therefore to declare that Tanzania is now landmine-free, with the exception of few mines retained for training and research purposes.

Tanzania is also current with regard to its reporting obligations as required under Article 7 of the Convention. The 2004/2005 Report was submitted to the United Nations Secretary-General early last month.

Mr. President,

Let me use this opportunity to briefly share with you our experience on an ongoing project in Tanzania as part of our country's compliance with the Convention.

Since 2000 Tanzania has hosted a Belgian sponsored APOPO research project aimed at enhancing humanitarian de-mining in Africa. The APOPO project is developing and disseminating a novel

Landmine detection technology, based on the extremely developed olfactory sense of trained rats.

I am happy to inform you that in a relatively short time, the joint efforts of my Government and APOPO have resulted in a proven alternative anti-personnel mine detector. This mine detection tool has been tested and accredited in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) by **the Instituto Nacional de Desminagem (IND)**, in Mozambique. Already 8 rats have passed the test, and are currently integrated in the de-mining activities of the Accelerated De-mining Program (ADP), in Mozambique.

Mr. President,

In line with this achievement, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania has set aside 24 Hectares for training and research, containing landmine samples.

On account of this success, the Government of Mozambique and Tanzania plan to transfer a batch of anti-personnel mines from Mozambique to Tanzania, for research purposes. These mines are particular to Mozambique, and are not available in Tanzania.

APOPO project still requires more research and product development to disseminate this technology within the mine action community.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Tanzania's belief that the world can do without anti-personnel mines. Today the world is awash with so many lethal weapons that we need not rely on anti-personnel mines for our defences. We are convinced that at the conclusion of this Review Conference more States will join hands so as to work together to end the plight of landmine victims. The United Republic of Tanzania looks forward for the best achievement of the Nairobi Summit in making the world free from anti-personnel mines and limiting their effects.

It can be done, let us play our part.

I thank you for your attention.