

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, HON. STEPHEN KALONZO MUSYOKA, EGH, MP, DURING THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF "THE NAIROBI SUMMIT 2004 ON "A MINE-FREE WORLD", AND OF THE HOST COUNTRY ORGANIZING COMMITTEE AT THE GRAND REGENCY HOTEL NAIROBI, ON WEDNESDAY 4TH FEBRUARY 2004.

Colleagues,

Hon. Members of the Parliamentary Foreign Relations and Defence Committee,

Ambassadors, and High Commissioners,

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to express my appreciation to you all for attending the formal launching of both the National Preparatory Process of the Nairobi Summit 2004 on a Mine-Free World, and for the Host Country Organizing Committee.

I especially wish to acknowledge the presence of the High Commissioner of Canada, H.E. Mr. Jim Wall and the Ambassador of Austria, H.E. Mr. Klaus Derkowitsch not only for their statements, but also for the commitment and support, which their countries have demonstrated for the forthcoming Conference. I would like to commend the Co-ordinator of the Kenya Coalition Against Landmines, Ms. Mereso Agina for her statement and the important leading role the Coalition continues to play on the issue of mines, especially within our region.

Kenya was one of a number of countries, which offered to host the First Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. This Conference will take place in Nairobi from 29th November to 3rd December, 2004.

The offer to host the Conference was borne partly out of Kenya's commitment and determination to contribute to the realization of the noble objectives of the Convention. It was also due to the fact that Africa remains the most heavily mined and mine-affected region. Holding the meeting in Kenya will help draw attention to the serious situation of the devastation caused by mines in some parts of the continent. Having Nairobi as the venue of the Conference is a gesture of solidarity with the mine-affected peoples and countries, not only in Africa but throughout the world.

**Distinguished Guests,
Ladies & Gentlemen,**

At the 5th Annual meeting held in Bangkok in September 2003, States Parties to the Convention unanimously decided to accept Kenya's offer to host the First Review Conference of the Convention. Since then, a number of steps have been taken by the Government in preparation for the hosting of this major event. This includes a National Preparatory Framework or Process.

The Preparatory Process has been organized at two main levels. There is the Host Country Organizing Committee, composed of representatives of the core Ministries or Departments of the Government namely:- Foreign Affairs, Office of the President, Tourism and Information, Health, Finance, Attorney General's Chambers, Department of Immigration; Kenya Airports Authority, and, the Kenya Coalition Against Landmines, the Nairobi Central Business District Association and other private sector and civil society organizations. The Committee, whose make up reflects the multicultural and inter-agency partnerships between the Government and non-governmental bodies in this national endeavour, will operate at the basic level. In the preparation for the Conference, the Government will work in partnership with the diplomatic community, the private sector, civil society and the media. Each one of these sectors has an important role to play and a contribution to make in this endeavour.

The Committee has four sub-committees dealing with various issues, ranging from security and protocol, to accommodation and transport. Members of both the Committee and sub-committees are present here. I am sure you will get to meet and know them personally and get to learn about their specific tasks.

The other level is the Cabinet Steering Committee comprising three Government Ministers namely, the Hon. Dr. Chris Murungaru, Minister of State for Provincial Administration & National Security, the Hon. Raphael Tuju, Minister for Tourism & Information, and myself. The Steering Committee will provide mainly political guidance and oversee the preparatory process.

The importance of preparatory activities cannot be over-emphasized. At various fora including the United Nations General Assembly, the Government has urged States Parties and other interested actors to actively prepare for the Nairobi meeting. Regional initiatives form an important component of the preparations.

Distinguished Guests,

An example of the importance of regional initiatives is the Workshop on Landmines and the Ottawa Convention scheduled for 3-4 March 2004 in Nairobi. The Workshop is jointly organized by Kenya Government and the International Committee of the Red Cross. It will provide a vital opportunity for countries in East Africa, Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region to harmonize positions on various aspects of the Convention, prior to the Nairobi Summit. I thank the International Committee of the Red Cross for their co-operation and support.

The Nairobi Summit is about the plight of ordinary people - men, women and children as well as entire communities suffering from the devastating effects

of mines. The global community should be sensitized about the fate of these people. The media has a crucial role to play in this respect. I challenge members of the media many of whom are present to publicize extensively, **the Nairobi Summit 2004 on a Mine Free World**, and the question of landmines and the devastating effect mines have on a defenseless population.

It is important that stakeholders in this field highlight the issue of landmines in regional fora and meetings. It is through such regional initiatives and activities that the noble aims of the Convention, notably, the comprehensive ban on anti-personnel mines, humanitarian demining and assistance to mine victims will be realized.

The Government is determined to make the First Review Conference a major success. Relevant Ministries and departments are making appropriate arrangements to ensure a successful meeting. The Host Country Organizing Committee is laying a solid foundation for the Summit.

**Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I now have the honour to declare the Host Country Organizing Committee and the National Preparatory Process for The Nairobi Summit 2004 on a Mine-Free World, formally launched. I wish the Organizing Committee, the Steering Committee, the Sub-Committees as well as all the other organizations and individuals involved in the process great success.

Thank you.