

(20/09/2004)

Joint Press Statement
between H.E. Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and President of the 5MSP,
and Mr. James Wolfensohn,
President of the World Bank

1. On 20 September 2004, Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and President of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, met with Mr. James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, at the World Bank headquarters in Washington, D.C., to discuss possible cooperation between the World Bank and the mine action community.

2. The two sides noted with satisfaction the results of the preliminary meeting held earlier on 22 July 2004 between the Resource Mobilization Task Force led by Dr. Sorajak Kasemsuvan, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand and Mr. Ian Johnson, Vice President, Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Network of the World Bank. They agreed that the issue of anti-personnel mines is not simply a humanitarian issue, but also a development issue with tremendous socio-economic implications for the affected countries and regions.

3. The Foreign Minister of Thailand welcomed the World Bank's partnership to support mine action in light of development. He informed the President of the World Bank of the efforts of mine-affected States Parties to meet both the UN Millennium Development Goals and the mine-clearance obligations stipulated by the Convention. He underlined that to fulfil both objectives, there is a need to mobilize resources for mine action, for which he expressed confidence that the World Bank could play a significant role in this regard.

4. The President of the World Bank appreciated the role of the Foreign Minister of Thailand as the President of the 5MSP, particularly in the area of resource mobilization. He reaffirmed the World Bank's full support to mine action, particularly projects which have sound developmental potential. He offered the World Bank's assistance as part of a larger global effort to establish a one-stop center to help facilitate and ensure effective coordination in mine action, if such a centre was needed. The World Bank stands ready to support mine-affected countries in capacity building and to coordinate with different financial sources for mine action funding. The Bank's conflict group will also update managers and country offices on Bank policies and approaches to support mine action, where appropriate.

5. In support of the objectives of the Convention, the President of the World Bank and/or representative will attend the First Review Conference of the Convention in Nairobi, Kenya, during 29 November to 3 December 2004, and there will be a session where representatives of the World Bank will meet with States Parties who are interested in learning about World Bank policies and procedures to support mine action.

6. The two sides agreed to follow up on today's discussion and to work closely together through their focal points (*) in order to realize a mine-free world.

(*) The World Bank's focal point is Mr. Ian Bannon, Manager, Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit

The focal points of the Resource Mobilization Task Force are

1) Mr. Jean Devlin, Chief of Mine Action Unit, Canadian International Development Agency

2) Mr. Earl Turcotte, Development Advisor, Mine Action Team, UNDP