



STATEMENT
BY

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GENEVA

AT

THE EIGHTH MEETING 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

AMMAN, 18-22 NOVEMBER 2007

Mr. President

Allow me to felicitate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Eighth Meeting of State Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their destruction. I am privileged to attend the proceedings of this annual meeting as an observer. Let me also extend warmest greetings from the people and government of India to the people and government of Jordan, the two countries which enjoy the friendliest of relations.

The AP Mine Ban Convention which is commemorating its 10th anniversary has many achievements to its credit. The humanitarian concern which is espoused by the convention has universal appeal. The vision of mine-free world is a noble vision. India understands and shares these ideals. India will consider joining the AP Mine Ban Convention whenever militarily effective alternative technologies that can perform, cost-effectively, the legitimate defensive role of anti-personnel landmines become available.

India is a State Party to Amended Protocol II on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and other Devices (Amended Protocol II) of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW Convention). This protocol covers both international and internal armed conflicts, banning use of non detectable anti-personnel mines, prohibiting their transfer, and limiting the use of non-self-destructing or self-deactivating mines to monitored and marked areas to prevent non-combatant casualties. Since 1st January 1997, India has not produced any non-detectable mines. India also observes a formal moratorium on export of landmines.

The Government of India has taken a number of measures and steps to address the humanitarian concerns, arising from indiscriminate use of landmines, in accordance with the international humanitarian law. Information regarding our obligations under Amended Protocol II has been disseminated to the Armed Forces. The Armed Forces, in turn, have imparted information to the civilians regarding mines laid in the border areas. This is apart from the warning signs already placed at such locations. Whenever and wherever the army has used mines for defensive military operations, the mines have been laid within fenced perimeters and well-marked. Post-operations, these mines have been cleared by trained troops.

India's armed forces have not used mines for maintenance of law and order or in internal security situations, or even for combating terrorists and terrorist organisations, including those that have indiscriminately used improvised explosive devices and mines. The Corps of Army Engineers continue to aid civil authorities in defusing and clearing such devices. Concerted efforts have been made to rehabilitate casualties from such cases by providing monetary

compensation, employment and assistance, including prosthetics for mine victims.

India remains committed to providing mine-related assistance under the UN umbrella. India is one of the largest contributors to the UN peacekeeping operations the world over. We have carried out de-mining operation in Cambodia, Angola and Afghanistan. In Cambodia, the Indian Army had deployed de-mining supervising teams in 1991-93. After training several de-mining platoons, de-mining of specific areas was entrusted to these teams, resulting in hundreds of square kilometres of land being cleared of mines. Our training effort towards this end continues even today. In Angola, the Indian Army had undertaken large-scale de-mining operations under the UN umbrella in 1995. More recently, in connection with the Indian Government's programme of constructing a road in the heavily mined south-western part of Afghanistan, from Zaranj to Delaram, we have undertaken a de-mining operation since December 2005, which is nearing completion, and the road construction now is in full swing.

India has been a ready provider of technical assistance and expertise for mine clearance and rehabilitation programmes in international de-mining efforts. Besides contributing to participating in national, regional and international workshops and seminars, an Indian Army team imparted training to the Cambodian Army on de-mining operations in March 2007. Thereafter, the trained Cambodian army detachments have undertaken de-mining operations in Sudan under the aegis of UNMIS, starting from mid-2007.

Mr. President,

To conclude, I will like to reiterate that the above measures and steps of my country underline its commitment to the humanitarian ideals of the convention. It is also because of this reason that India has attended all meetings of States Parties since the Nairobi Review Conference.

I thank you for your attention.