

**Statement**  
**by**  
**H.E. Mr. A. Kavadze, Ambassador, the Permanent Representative of Georgia to**  
**the UN and Other International Organizations at Geneva**

Fourth Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention  
Geneva, 16-20 September 2002

Mr. Chairman,

On several occasions Georgia has expressed its support for a global ban on antipersonnel mines and now I would like to reiterate that the Georgian government supports internationally effective worldwide ban on antipersonnel mines and permanently participates in UN and other international organizations efforts to achieve the objectives of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

Regrettably, for the time being Georgia is unable to accede to the Mine Ban Treaty because of its incapability to fulfill the obligations put forward in the Convention and, as you are aware, Georgia's jurisdiction does not apply to the mined areas in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region. To be more specific, just in Abkhazia, Georgia there are hundreds military objects left by troops of former Soviet Union and Russia as well as separatist militants and mercenaries. And as a result, nowadays Georgia cannot carry out monitoring and demining works on these territories.

Perhaps I should make that clearer by saying that, taking into consideration existing realities, the central Georgian government cannot guarantee at present the implementation of Ottawa Convention and fulfillment of all commitments undertaken by acceding to the Convention in above mentioned post conflict regions of Georgia. Besides Georgia has refrained from acceding to the Ottawa Convention because at the moment it does not have appropriate financial or technological means for clearing and destructing of the mines specified in the Convention. In this connection the Georgian Government welcomes any international assistance to my country.

At the same time I would like to stress that Georgia is actively involved in mine clearance activities on the bilateral level. Particularly, here I wish to mention an Agreement signed with the government of Turkey in January 2001 on establishing a bilateral regime for the non-use and removal of antipersonnel mines and preventing their use for frontier guard purposes in future. This Agreement constitutes our mutual desire of keeping the common border free of mines and expression of the achieved quality of the relationship between the two countries and underlines willingness of both parties to strengthen the existing relations and to contribute to stability and mutual trust in the region. Georgia is expressing its readiness to extend this clear example of bilateral cooperation on other neighboring countries.

I would especially like to touch upon the problem of non-state actors (separatist militants and rebel groups) who are responsible for much of the mine use around the

world. In this connection Georgia has regrettable experience in tackling this problem in case of such provinces of Georgia as Abkhazia and former South Ossetia. In our opinion much more needs to be done by International Community to make more accountable non-state actors to the universally recognized principles, including Mine Ban Treaty.

Now I wish to express our appreciation for Landmine Monitor Report 2002, which has been just presented to the delegations by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). As regards to the ICBL's assertion, accusing Georgian forces in breaching the declared moratorium on the use of antipersonnel mines, being in place since 1996, I would like to reassure the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties, that the Georgian Government will very carefully consider this allegation and results of special inquiries will be submitted to the ICBL in due time.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to add that Georgia very clearly recognizes how many challenges still remain before us and the Georgian government expresses its readiness in contributing to the further coordination and effectiveness of global mine action. Besides Georgia is ready for any form of collaboration with all parties on the landmine issue and any activities designed by the Convention, certainly within its existing powers.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.