

Statement by César de Carvalho, General Director of the Guinea-Bissau Mine Action Coordination Centre, at the Standing Committee on the General Status & Operation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Geneva, 14 May 2003.

Guinea-Bissau signed the Mine Ban Treaty on 3 December 1997. **The first stockpile destruction on anti-personnel landmines occurred in February 1998** (Bissau/Prabis), even before the Treaty's ratification, for a **total of 4,711**.

After the 1998-1999 conflict, the Government resumed its effort on this issue, and under CAAMI and UNDP/UNICEF guidance ratified the Mine Ban Treaty on **22 May 2001**, becoming the **116th State-Party to the Treaty**.
The Convention comes into force on 1 November 2001.

The UN support project assisted the Government in identifying the various anti-personnel mines stocks throughout the country, in order to Guinea-Bissau's first report to the Standing Committee on stockpile destruction. Between 25 and 28 of March 2002, a joint delegation including representatives of CAAMI, the Ministries of Internal Administration Economy, Finance and Defence, UNICEF and UNDP (included the media, national radio and TV) visited military facilities in the country to inventory stockpiled landmines.

A total of 4,997 anti-personnel landmines have been identified in 17 army sites throughout the country, on March 2002.

The first phase of the stockpile destruction of the remaining stocks of its anti-personnel landmines has been completed on 12 September 2002, for a total of one thousand AP mine.

The remaining stockpile destruction (3,997 Anti-Personnel Mines) is scheduled to take place in 2003. Following the recommendation made by the treaty Art 7 "transparency measures" some of AP mines will be transferred for training in mine detection and clearance techniques.

However, despite our good will in meeting all the Convention's obligations, we haven't received the proper attention from the donor community.

Currently, we would be in a position enabling us to do the complete destruction of these mine except for the fact that this will depend on the financial support for that purpose.

What I would like to stress on here is, that a country such as Guinea-Bissau should be supported regarding this matter, since we are not falling short of political good will to carry out that obligation.

Thank you for your attention.