



Federal Foreign Office

Address by

Ambassador FRIEDRICH GRÖNING,

**Deputy Federal Government Commissioner
for Disarmament and Arms Control,
Federal Foreign Office, Berlin,**

**at the First Review Conference of the States
Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition
of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and
Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on
Their Destruction**

**Nairobi
December 3, 2004**

Check against delivery please!

Mr. President,

let me first refer to the comprehensive statement delivered yesterday by the representative of the Netherlands in the name of the European Union.

For Germany, I would like to add a few points.

The Ottawa Convention has now been in force for five years. In this short time, it has become a humanitarian norm which we hope one day to become generally applicable custom.

The purpose of this Conference was to review the operation and status of the Convention after the first five years of its being in force. The result is positive. Much has already been said about its success—in the fields of mine action, victim assistance and universalization.

However, as important as reviewing and analyzing the impact of the Convention to date may be, even more important is to clearly identify the future challenges in order to ensure the Convention's continued success and quality in the next phase of its implementation. This is the goal of our new Action Plan, to be adopted today.

Mr. President,

Germany was one of the first countries to actively tackle the worldwide problem of antipersonnel mines. And we remain among the biggest donors in the world. In 1992, we already had a dedicated budget to fund our humanitarian action projects. Since that date Germany has unilaterally supported hundreds of projects in 32 countries and made available some 137 million euro. And since the entry into force of the Mine Ban Convention, the Federal Government has spent 93.5 million euro on humanitarian mine action, a figure which does not even include expenditure on research and development

Germany classifies humanitarian mine action as part of its humanitarian assistance. Priority is given to the clearance of mines and duds in places where they pose a threat to life and limb. Assistance is provided in line with humanitarian needs. Only thus can we take responsibility for clearing mines in countries that have not yet signed or ratified the Ottawa Convention.

Eliminating mines is our priority goal. Mines that are in the ground or kept in inadequately secured stockpiles that present a danger to people must be cleared and destroyed as quickly as possible. The only mines that can claim no new victims and bring no new suffering are mines that have been destroyed. Because we all share this view, we are celebrating here the "Nairobi Summit for a Mine-free World"!

Let me express once again our gratitude to the Government of Kenya for organizing and hosting this important event.

Mr. President,

humanitarian mine action must be followed up with development cooperation. Demined roads must be repaired, fields cultivated, schools and houses made habitable. Above all, the countries affected by mines and duds are themselves under an obligation to coordinate relevant activities and set appropriate priorities.

Where mine action comes too late and mines have already claimed their victims, all possible help must be provided. Germany has now spent over 8.8 million euro on mine victims, thus enabling a considerable number of people, many of whom were seriously maimed, to commence new lives.

The Federal Government will continue to do its utmost to use all opportunities that emerge in the field of disarmament to eliminate the danger posed by mines and to support humanitarian mine action projects. I am particularly pleased to inform you that the Federal Parliament has decided to increase the funds available for humanitarian mine action in 2005 by over 23 %, allowing us to plan for assistance also to countries, where we were unable to do so up to now.

Mr. President,

in a few minutes I will sign the Nairobi Declaration on behalf of my country. Germany is deeply committed to the goals of the Declaration. Just as we supported you as a Friend of the President, we are wholeheartedly on the side of all those who work to free the world of the scourge of antipersonnel mines.

Thank you.