

**NAMIBIA'S PRESENTATION TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE MEETING ON STOCKPILE DESTRUCTION
09-12 FEBRUARY 2004 AND TO PREPARATORY
MEETING ON 13 FEBRUARY 2004 IN GENEVA,
SWITZERLAND**

Mr. Chairman
Distinguished delegates
Invited guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour and pleasure to have this opportunity to address this meeting of standing committee. Let me also convey my deepest appreciation to our host, the government of Switzerland, for the very warm welcome that they extend to me upon arrival, and for unlimited hospitality I continue to enjoy. More thanks should be given to the Donor Group of the Sponsorship Programme for offering assistance to the Namibian participant in this important meeting.

We are gathered here today with a common objective, which is to create a world free from landmines. This meeting is of particular importance as it serves as a wake up call as we prepare for the First Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty later this year in Nairobi, Kenya.

First and foremost, I wish to see this meeting generate a growing support and enhanced awareness of the devastating humanitarian effects of landmines.

Secondly, I wish to see this meeting of Standing Committee as linking the entire international community at all levels. I wish to see that the issues of landmines are not only taken up in certain capitals, but in all capitals across the globe.

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I wish to see that in the process leading up to the First Review Conference, all regions take up this issue as a part of their regional agenda and that cooperation is strengthened within and across the regions.

We must therefore, work together to utilize the combined strength of the high number of states Parties for practical actions and achievements.

We must share experiences and information. We must exchange and transfer technologies in stockpile destruction, mine clearance and victim assistance.

We must increase assistance in mine surveys for countries in need to identify the scope and the seriousness of the landmine situation.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS (MEASURES TAKEN TO EFFECT MINE BAN TREATY ON ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES).

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1. The Republic of Namibia was among the first countries to sign the Mine Ban Treaty when the treaty was open for signatures from 03 December 1997 in Ottawa, Canada, until its entry into force on the 1 March 1999.
2. Namibia has since ratified the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel mines and on their Destruction on 21 September 1998.
3. The Republic of Namibia is **bound** by Ottawa Convention, hence, she does not develop, produce anti-personnel land mines and has never exported anti-personnel mines.
4. The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Namibia has destroyed all its stockpiles of anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance from its stores in May 1998. Namibia retained a very limited number of anti-personnel mines as permitted by the convention for its research and development, training in mine detection, mine clearance and destruction techniques.

5. The destruction of stockpiles was done before the Mine Ban Treaty entry into force on 1st March 1999. At that time there was no destruction format and guidelines to be followed, hence, the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Namibia invited local media and Military Attachés accredited to Namibia to witness the event.
6. The Government of the Republic of Namibia is due to submit its Article 7 Report before the Review Conference to be held in Nairobi, Kenya late this year.
7. Namibia attended two States Parties Meetings, namely; First and Fifth. Namibia could not attend three consecutive States Parties meetings, the Second, Third and Fourth, due^{to} late notification.
8. Plans are underway for the drafting of domestic law on anti-personnel mine ban as required by Article 9 of the Mine Ban Treaty.

MINE RISK EDUCATION

In 1990, the Explosive Unit of the Namibian Police launched a radio and television campaign in order to warn residents about the dangers of Mines and UXOs in the Northern area of the country. This campaign succeeded in reducing the number of casualties in the contaminated areas.

In 1995, the government launched a second campaign, which included the distribution of T-shirts and pamphlets warning the public about the dangers of Mines and UXOs.

In 1998, the ministries of Information and Broadcasting and Defence with US financial, technical, and material support re-launched the mine awareness campaign featuring the distribution of large number of promotional material, including pens, rulers T-shirts and hats and numerous other similarities items. Those items were, however, mainly distributed in modern schools in some of the contaminated northern parts of the country.

MINE CLEARANCE

Mine clearance operations have been underway in Namibia since 1989. The clearance around ~~mine~~ former SADF military bases conducted between 1995-1998 destroyed 2,383 anti-personnel mines and 1,107 UXOs. The clearing of the berms and minefields around 401 power pylons as part of a second mine clearance programme were completed in 2000 and have destroyed over 4000 R2M2 and J69 anti personnel mines.

Since 1995 the government of the United State was assisted Namibia in training of personnel, providing demining equipment and funds to facilitate demining operations.

The landmine situation in Namibia constitutes neither a humanitarian emergency nor a major obstacles for development, except the area of ~~fast~~ conflict on the Angolan border in Kavango and Western Caprivi where minor isolated mine and UXOs accidents have been reported due to Unita banditry activities in the past. There is no areas in Namibia declared no go areas due to presence of mines.

MINE SURVIVORS ASSISTANCE AND DISABILITY POLICY AND PRACTICE

Landmine casualties in Namibia receive emergency medical treatment from Local Health Centres in the mine affected areas and casualties with more serious injuries are transferred by state ambulances to Windhoek Central State Hospital. The hospital has a rehabilitation centre that provides prostheses, physiotherapy services and psychological support. Depending on the degree of victimization, landmine survivors those who are totally disabled receive assistance and monthly pensions from the Ministry of Health and Social Services.

I thank you.