

STATEMENT BY NAMIBIAN DELEGATE AT THE 2ND SESSION OF 2004 MEETINGS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE OTTAWA CONVENTION

GENEVA, 21-25 JUNE 2004

Mr. Chairman
Distinguished delegates
Invited guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, let me thank the sponsors of the meeting for inviting me to participate in this very important meeting of the Standing Committee prior to the First Review Conference later this year.

I would like to brief this meeting about the Namibian activities within the Ottawa Convention which in Namibia entered into force 1 March 1999. At our last meeting of the Standing Committees I have reported that Namibia destroyed all its stockpiles of anti-personnel mines and Unexploded Ordnance from its stores in May 1998. Namibia does not possess huge stockpiles of anti-personnel mines due to the fact that those were just left overs during the liberation struggle.

The Republic of Namibia is bound by Ottawa Convention hence; she does not develop, produce anti-personnel mines and has never exported anti-personnel mines.

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.

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.

With regard to article 7 transparency report the Ministry of Defence completed the report and submitted it to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs this month (June 2004). It will reach the designated office in due course.

Mine clearance operations in Namibia has been completed in 2000. At this stage, the landmine situation in Namibia constitutes neither a humanitarian emergency nor a major obstacles for development, except the area of post conflict on the Angolan border in Kavango and Western Caprivi where minor isolated mine and Unexploded Ordnance accidents have been reported due to Unita Banditry activities in the past but present the accidents have decreased dramatically. There is no areas in Namibia declared no go areas due to the presence of mines. As for now Engineer Regiment and Nampol Explosive Unit are vigorously hunting for Unexploded Ordnance in the Northern regions of the country including Kavango region and Western Caprivi. Today Namibia is viewed as one of the Mine safe country in the SADC region.

MINE SURVIVORS ASSISTANCE AND DISABILITY POLICY AND PRACTICE

Landmine victims in Namibia are treated just like other injury person in the society, depending on the degree of victimization, landmine survivors who are totally disabled receive assistance from the Ministry of Health and Social Services. There is no specific centre for landmine survivors only but the existing centre is for every disabled person where they receiving various training skills for their future employment.

The Government has a strong feeling and will to create a centre for landmine survivors but due to lack of resources this exercise cannot be implemented. Donors are encouraged to support this Government initiative in order to assist landmine victims.

I thank you!