



STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR J .U. AYALOGU
AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
NIGERIA DURING THE STANDING COMMITTEE
MEETINGS ON OTTAWA CONVENTION
ON 22ND JUNE 2004

Mr. Co-Chair,

I thank you for giving me the floor and I congratulate you for the effective guidance of this session. This is the first disarmament meeting I am attending since my assumption of duty three weeks ago as Nigeria's Permanent Representative. Nigeria attaches so much importance to the Ottawa Convention, that on my appointment as the Permanent Representative of Nigeria, I took it as a personal challenge to pursue the immediate implementation of the convention in my country.

Mr. Co-Chair,

I am pleased to report that Nigeria has this morning filed its initial report covering up to 31st December 2003.

Nigeria does not have mined areas or stockpiles. However, the country has 3364 anti-personnel mines retained for training purposes. To advance the objectives of the Convention, Nigeria has recently established an Administrative Organ in the Ministry of Defence, headed by Brigadier-General S. A. Abdurrahman, who is also attending this meeting. He will serve as the contact point in Nigeria on all issues related to the Convention. Towards domesticating the Convention, the Federal Ministry of Justice is currently working on a draft bill, which will be considered by the Federal Executive Council before it is submitted to the National Assembly for legislation.

Mr. Co-Chair,

The only area contaminated by unexploded ordinances in the country is the area affected by the Lagos bomb blast of 2002. A survey of the affected area has been carried out and substantial clearance and destruction effected with assistance from United States of America and United Kingdom. I wish to take this opportunity to express Nigerian's appreciation to the two countries as well as other international organisations which assisted in this regard. The final phase of clearance

activity will start in the last week of July 2004 and would take about 27 weeks to complete.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Some Nigerian citizens have been victims of ordinances from the civil war which took place in the country thirty six years ago and during peace keeping operations in various conflict zones around the world. The Ministry of Defence is planning to conduct a census of such victims, after which, appropriate action will be taken for their socio-economic reintegration. In view of competing demands on resources it is quite possible that Nigeria will need assistance in this regard. Any request for assistance to these victims will be made known at our future meetings.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Once more thank you for this opportunity to clarify issues regarding my country's policy on the implementation of the Geneva Convention and I can assure you of my government's commitment to advance the humanitarian objectives of this Convention.