



**Government of Afghanistan  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

**Statement regarding:**

**Destroying Stockpiled Antipersonnel Mines**

**by Dr. M. Haider Reza  
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**Sixth Meeting of States Parties to The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use,  
Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

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[CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY]**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be here today to address the Sixth Meeting of States Parties to *The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction*. I would like to use the time I have now to brief you on the progress made in destroying stockpiled antipersonnel mines and other abandoned explosive devices in Afghanistan and our plans for the years to come.

Under the leadership of our Ministry of Defense and with financial support from Canada, we have rolled out a robust nation-wide project to identify, survey and secure all ammunition storage points in Afghanistan. This effort has to date identified some 2.4 million devices of various kinds; the majority of these devices have already been destroyed. Included in these figures are some twenty thousand antipersonnel mines; bringing the total number of stockpiled antipersonnel mines destroyed in Afghanistan since 1 March 2003 – the day the Convention entered into force for Afghanistan – to over 31,500. I myself witnessed the destruction of 1,052 stockpiled antipersonnel mines less than a month ago; in fact I pressed the button for this destruction, a very satisfying experience for me.

As we move along the path towards a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan, my Government understands that we must address our Ottawa Treaty obligation regarding the destruction of stockpiled antipersonnel mines, and we are confident that we will meet this target in 2007. We do so however, as a matter of practicality and principle, within the broader context of addressing all of the dangerous munitions stored throughout rural Afghanistan.

On the practical side, in the course of destroying stockpiled antipersonnel mines in Afghanistan, we have found that in a number of cases these devices are co-located with other, sometimes unstable, munitions that also require destruction.

As a principle, the Afghan Government believes that antipersonnel mines represent only a very small fraction of our deadly legacy of past conflict. There have been instances where we have surveyed an ammunition stockpile to discover that while there are no antipersonnel mines to be found, there are other deadly devices that we wish to destroy. This is because we do not want munitions to fall into the wrong hands and because there have been a number of deadly incidents in the past involving unstable, unguarded or unknown stockpiles of munitions in my country.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In our efforts to ensure that innocent people can go about their daily lives without the danger of being blown up by dangerous munitions, we have found that we must not only look toward compliance with our Convention requirements under Article 4, and related reporting requirements, but we must go beyond this to address the broader explosive remnants of war problem. With the assistance of the international community, I am confident that Afghanistan will meet its obligation to destroy all of our known stocks of antipersonnel mines by 2007. We are however less confident about the level of support available to assist us in addressing our broader explosive remnants of war challenge, for which we will require additional assistance, both in cash and in kind. I hope that our friends in the donor capitals will assist us in this regard – now and beyond 2007.

Thank you for your kind attention.