

Statement of H.E. Mr. Akramul Qader, Ambassador and State Minister, Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA, at the high-level segment of the Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Cartagena, Colombia, 3-4 December 2009

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Madame President,  
Excellencies,  
Madame Secretary General,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of Colombia for making excellent arrangements for the Second Review Conference, and for the warm hospitality extended to my delegation.

Bangladesh, a country constitutionally committed to general and complete disarmament, enjoys an impeccable record in disarmament and non-proliferation, in nuclear as well as in conventional weapons. We are party to almost all UN disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, and make endeavours, within our limited resources, towards their full implementation at the national, regional and international levels.

In keeping with her Constitutional commitment towards a complete and general disarmament, and also in a sense of humanitarian need and moral obligation, Bangladesh became a signatory to the Anti-Personnel Mine Convention (APM) on 7 May 1998. Bangladesh ratified the Convention on 6 September 2000, and became the first South Asian country to adhere to Anti-Personnel Mine Convention. Bangladesh is committed to its implementation at national, regional and global levels.

Madame President,

As a State Party, Bangladesh has accepted certain obligations under the Convention, including destruction of existing stockpile, reporting compliance and enacting national legislation banning use, production and transfer of APMs. Bangladesh has already undertaken the following steps in compliance with the provisions of the Anti-Personnel Mine Convention:

- **Stockpile destruction:** Bangladesh has already completed destruction of its Anti-Personnel Mine stockpile amounting to 1,89,227 APMs in March 2005, i.e., within the Convention-stipulated timeframe. A small number of APMs, 15,000, of different categories, however, had initially been retained under Article 3 of the Convention. Bangladesh has now 12,500 APMs. These APMs are used only to impart training to

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Bangladesh Armed Forces personnel, specifically to assist engineering contingents to prepare for UN peacekeeping missions with de-mining mandate;

- **Ban on transfer of APMs:** Bangladesh has never produced or exported APMs. The APMs presently in possession of the government were procured from friendly countries/international market, and not meant for transfer to any other country;
- **Non-use of APMs in internal conflict:** Considering the inhuman effect of APMs on innocent civilian population, APMs were never used in the counter-insurgency campaign in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. The campaign came to an end in 1997 with the successful signing of a Peace Treaty;
- **Reporting:** As per Article 7 of the Convention, Bangladesh regularly submits compliance report to the United Nations.

Madame President,

Bangladesh is aware of its obligation in terms of enacting enabling legislation in support of the provisions of the Anti-Personnel Mine Convention. Recently, the government has initiated the process to draft legislation banning use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines.

Madame President,

Bangladesh calls for putting an end to the use of anti-personnel landmines. Many civilians, including children and women, have fallen victims to landmines in conflict and post-conflict situations. Bangladesh has fulfilled most of its obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Convention, and would soon meet the remaining obligations under the Convention. We have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities. We endorse the Cartagena Plan of Action and look forward to the full implementation of the Actions envisaged for the next five years. We call upon all States, which have not yet done so, to accede to the Convention. Assistance should also be extended in mine clearing operations as well as in rehabilitation of victims in the affected countries.

Madame President,

The disarmament agenda, both of nuclear and conventional weapons, is absolutely critical for achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), by the developing countries, particularly the Least Developed Countries. Appalling

military expenditure in excess of one trillion dollar every year is morally unacceptable at a time when financial and economic crisis have pushed millions around the world below poverty line and made over one billion people, one-sixth of the humanity, go to sleep hungry every night. It is estimated the world spends some US\$ 3.5 million every day on weapons and soldiers, and over US\$ 42 billion worth of conventional weapons are sold to developing nations every year. We reiterate our demand that the major military powers stop this mindless arms race and divert the resources to much worthy causes of ensuring development of all our peoples. This would be the best guarantee for peace, security, human rights and development, ensuring a shared prosperous future for the entire humanity.

I thank you Madame President.

