



THE CARTAGENA SUMMIT ON A MINE-FREE WORLD
Statement by Ambassador Valdemar Carneiro Leão
Head of the Brazilian Delegation

Cartagena, 29 November – 4 December 2009

Madam President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Brazil would like to express its most sincere appreciation to the Government of Colombia for hosting this Summit and the people of Cartagena for their warm hospitality. Colombia has certainly given us another proof of its commitment to the Convention and its successful implementation. We would also like to thank Ambassador Susan Eckey for skillfully conducting this review process, including the adoption of the documents that will guide our work over the years ahead.

Madam President,

As we gather here this week to review the status and operation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, it is clear that this international instrument has attained significant results since its entry into force. These results can be seen in two main areas: disarmament and humanitarian assistance. The Ottawa Convention represents a major contribution towards the elimination of a category of weapon which has caused great suffering in many regions of the world. At the same time, the efforts aimed at the full implementation of the Convention have resulted so far in substantial improvements in the humanitarian assistance affected people receive worldwide.

Brazil is firmly committed to the goals of the Convention, being one of its original signatories. In 1996, we co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 51/45/S, which paved the way for the negotiations that followed.

Brazil has never resorted to the use of anti-personnel landmines. We are fortunate not to have mined areas within our territory nor next to our borders. We have ceased production of these weapons many years ago and our commitment to the obligations of the Convention has always been firm. Brazil has completely destroyed its stockpiles in 2003 ahead of the deadline required by Article 4. We have adopted national legislation which heavily penalizes activities prohibited by the treaty, according to Article 9. Likewise, the country strictly complies with the provisions of Article 7 regarding transparency and reporting of all relevant information regarding anti-personnel mines.

Brazil attaches particular importance to international cooperation and assistance under the terms of Article 6. We have regularly contributed to the humanitarian demining missions of the Organization of American States in Central and South America.

Brazilian Armed Forces have military officers specifically trained for the destruction, recovery and defusing of explosives and UXO. The participation of such teams in humanitarian demining missions has also proved a valuable experience, as it improves our ability to further extend our international cooperation activities.

In Colombia, one of the most seriously affected countries, we have currently 7 military officers working together with local officers in the demining process. We have recently sent two officers to a humanitarian demining training center in Benin. The main purpose of the initiative is to enable this particular center to expand its activities toward Portuguese speaking countries in Africa, some of which are still tragically affected by the anti-personnel mines. It is our view that cooperation is essential to encourage the adherence of countries with fewer resources and also to ensure that the implementation of the Convention is undertaken in a non-discriminatory manner.

Alongside cooperation and assistance, Brazil attaches great importance to the universalization of the Convention.

As the name of this meeting implies, if we are seriously concerned about achieving a mine-free world, we should make every effort to stimulate ratifications and accessions of the main producers and possessors of anti-personnel mines still remaining outside the Ottawa Convention.

Despite the achievements accomplished so far, the goal of universal participation still looks far away. In this regard, Brazil believes that the strengthening of the United Nations in demining actions and outreach activities aimed at attracting further accessions is an indispensable tool for universalization.

With regard to the obligations contained in Article 5, Brazil considers that the destruction of anti-personnel mines in mined areas should remain a priority for all States Parties. This work requires considerable amount of time and resources, but it must be seriously addressed in order to release hazardous areas, thus avoiding further damage to the civilian population and fostering socio-economic benefits. Much progress has been made, but a significant number of countries are still to meet their mine clearance obligations. The possibility of extension requests should not be seen as way of endlessly postponing the fulfillment of such obligations. Brazil expects that States Parties which have been granted extensions will be able to continuously report on actions undertaken to meet current deadlines.

Other issues that remain equally important are the destruction of stockpiles and the dismantling of production facilities for anti-personnel mines. These issues should be transparently addressed by States Parties. We are convinced that the Cartagena Declaration and Action Plan are a positive contribution to this end.

Those, as well as victim assistance, are closely related to international cooperation and assistance efforts. In many cases, States Parties have indicated the need for help in adequately

implementing the Convention. The document entitled "Review of the Operation and Status of the Convention" indicates, for example, that out of the 40 States Parties that have not yet fulfilled Article 5 obligations, 33 have declared that they are seeking or have sought cooperation in order to fully implement them. As in the case of victim assistance, Brazil believes that we could benefit from a straightforward mechanism for matching the available resources to the specific needs identified by some States Parties. The Implementation Support Unit, hosted by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, could play a relevant role in that process and an effort should be made to provide it with proper financial resources.

As we approach the end of this Review Conference, there should be no doubt in our minds that positive results were achieved. We have before us fairly ambitious documents which realistically reflect where we stand, but at the same time set high standards for the work ahead. The Ottawa Convention has been repeatedly referred to as a model instrument in many areas and, as such, it requires a substantial effort from all States Parties. A mine-free world can only be the result of mine-free countries, and we expect a firm commitment to that end, so that the Convention remains an inspiration.

Thank you.

