

**STATEMENT BY HON. OUSMAN JAMMEH, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA, AT THE CARTAGENA SUMMIT FOR A MINE-FREE
WORLD 30th November to 4th December 2009.**

Madam President

Executive Coordinator

Executive Secretary

Secretary - General

Your Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Please permit me to thank the Government and people of Colombia and of course the Organizers of this Cartagena Summit, for the warm welcome accorded to all of us here present. Let me also welcome and congratulate you Madam, as the newly elected President, with wishes of a joyous and successful tenure.

Madam President,

The Gambia is a small, beautiful and peaceful country located in the west coast of Africa surrounded by the Republic of Senegal except for the Atlantic Ocean. As a peaceful and peace loving country, The Gambia has no need to stockpile or deploy anti-personnel mines. However, since we are part of a region, which, unfortunately, has experienced and continue to experience conflict situations, we are affected by the problems associated with land mines. Despite her meager resources, The Gambia had to cope with the influx of refugees as well as having to cater for victims of land mines.

The Gambia is a Mine-free country and a Signatory to all international Treaties and Conventions in this regard. To this effect, I am pleased to announce to this august Summit that we have recently submitted our Article 7 transparency Report

and we are committed to complete the ratification of outstanding related legal instruments.

Madam President,

The Gambia has never use landmines other than to train its security forces for peace keeping and peace support operations in mine risk areas around the world.

In 1982, a Rebel War broke out in the Southern Cassamance Region of the Republic of Senegal, and to date it is still raging, although sporadically. This conflict situation in Senegal has greatly affected us in The Gambia.

On the 2nd of December 2007, three School Children from a border village, whilst looking for sticks in the bush for their School Garden, were blown up by a Land Mine. One Boy died on the spot, whilst a second succumbed to his injuries in hospital two days later. The only Girl within the group survived but has been condemned to live with her scars for the rest of her life.

Madam President,

The Gambia Government would like to request for technical assistance for the monitoring of our borders, especially the southern border to ascertain that no mines are planted within our territory.

Our Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, in collaboration with the Gambia Red Cross Society, provides limited assistance to landmine Victims.

The Canadian Nova Scotia Gambia Association, with funding from UNICEF, conducts annual Land Mine awareness campaigns in villages along the affected borders in the form of Billboards, Pictorial Leaflets, and Cinema Shows.

In conclusion, Madam President, The Gambia fully supports and associates herself with the anti – personnel Mine Convention and commends all nations and organizations working towards the full implementation of this very important Convention.

Thank you.