



STATEMENT BY THE
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
AT THE
SECOND REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE
CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION
AND TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION

*Delivered by Mr. Carl E. Case
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Thank you, Madame President.

On behalf of Secretary General Jose Miguel Isulza, I am pleased and honored to take this opportunity to reaffirm the collective commitment of the Organization of American States to Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, better known as the Ottawa Convention. This support has been firmly demonstrated by 33 member states of the Western Hemisphere through their ratification of the Convention, as well as by the stated commitment of the OAS General Assembly of freeing the Americas from the devastating impact of antipersonnel landmines. Moreover, the presence of delegations from nearly all American States at this Second Review Conference to the Convention further reinforces their enduring and binding interest in the humanitarian principles set forth by the Ottawa process. The OAS was one of the first regional organizations to endorse the Mine Ban Treaty and to encourage its member states to ratify or consider accession in order to ensure its full and effective implementation.

Beyond these political and diplomatic efforts, the Organization of American States has played a key role in supporting its members' work in the area of mine action in accordance with the Convention and with their mine action plans in order to meet mine-clearance deadlines pursuant to Article 5. For more than seventeen years, the OAS has directly supported humanitarian demining activities, carried out campaigns to educate people living in mine-affected communities about the risks posed by landmines, and addressed the physical, psychological, and socioeconomic rehabilitation needs of landmine survivors and their families through its Program for Comprehensive Action against Antipersonnel Mines, or AICMA.

A large measure of the success of this Program is owed to the valuable contributions by member states including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; as well as to the financial donations by OAS permanent observers such as Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Thanks to this collective effort, significant progress has been made.

With OAS assistance, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Suriname have all fulfilled their commitments to make their territory mine-free. Nicaragua has indicated that it will complete its demining activities prior to its Article 5 deadline in May 2010. Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru have redoubled their efforts to comply with their obligations under the Convention.

The effective cooperation between the mine-affected OAS member states and the General Secretariat's Mine Action Program, has accomplished in the Americas what would have been far more difficult without a coordinated, collective effort. The OAS Program has served to reinforce and complement the significant national commitment required to deal with the complex problem of landmines. However, it is clear that these efforts can not succeed without significant support. While affected states have the obligation to commit national resources to dealing with mine-related issues, including clearance, risk education and victim assistance, many of these same governments have limited resources to address the problem adequately. The Organization of American States urges the international donor community to continue its humanitarian support for ongoing demining activities in Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Peru, as well as for victim rehabilitation in these and other OAS member states, including Guatemala and El Salvador. The OAS also encourages its member states, permanent observers, international organizations, and the international community in general to continue their technical and financial support for continuation of the combined Ecuador-Peru humanitarian demining program on their common border, which constitutes a successful example of international cooperation and an effective confidence- and security-building measure.

We wish to congratulate the President of the Second Review Conference and all those organizations who supported the outstanding and tireless efforts undertaken to organize this event, particularly in the development of the Cartagena Action Plan 2010-2014, which we believe will serve as a guide to the continued success of the Ottawa Convention process. Just as the OAS General Assembly has expressed its strong backing for the Nairobi Action Plan for 2005-2009 through its Resolution 2435 at its 34th Regular Session this year, we are confident that it will similarly endorse the Cartagena document.

Finally, the Organization commends the Government of Colombia for its exemplary hosting of this Summit meeting. At the same time, we congratulate Colombia for its determination to confront the complex problems it faces in dealing with its landmine problem even as non-state actors continue to use these weapons indiscriminately. We urge the donor community to recognize the importance of this struggle, as well as the efforts being made by other OAS member states like Chile, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Peru, by continuing to support their efforts to clear mines, protect their people from these dangers and assist those who have fallen victim.

Finally, we are gratified that the world has come to Cartagena and the Americas to discuss how unified efforts can continue to roll back the effects of antipersonnel landmines across the globe. We are assured that as the international community labors in the same coordinated manner that has characterized mine action among the American States, it will be possible to end the scourge of these weapons once and for all.

Thank you very much.