

**Statement by  
H.E. Ambassador Jorge Torres Pereira,  
Head of Delegation of Portugal to the Eleventh Meeting of States  
Parties to the The Ottawa  
Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and  
Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

(Phnom Penh, 27 November 2011)

Mr President,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your appointment as President of the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention. I am sure that under your leadership this meeting will further our goal of bringing to an end the destruction and the fear caused by landmines.

As for our host, I take this opportunity to thank the Kingdom of Cambodia, a country that has worked hard to minimize the humanitarian disaster caused by these weapons.

[Portugal aligns itself with the EU statement earlier delivered.]

Mr President,

The tragic consequences of anti-personnel mines have for long concerned Portugal. Landmines have an enduring, destructive effect, killing and maiming innocent civilians, including those that were born after the end of the conflicts in which they were used. In addition, economic and social development also becomes seriously compromised, further punishing already impacted communities.

This is why, Portugal has been involved, from the outset, in the process leading to the adoption of the Ottawa Convention, actively participating in the drafting of the text and swiftly signing it and further ratifying it. In fact, Portugal had already stopped producing landmines well in advance of the Convention's entry into force. Portugal has thus complied with all relevant provisions of the Ottawa Convention from a very early stage.

Mr President,

One of the most disheartening features of landmines is, indeed, their prolonged destructive effect on people's lives. It is therefore clear that banning the production and the use of these weapons is but a beginning of a pathway we all here engaged in. Others, we hope, should join us in this journey.

In this regard, we are fully committed to the Cartagena Action Plan for 2010-2014, in particular to the thereof goals of assistance in demining and universalization of the Convention.

Concerning the former goal, Portugal has contributed both financially and with know-how, in the framework of the Portuguese cooperation and development policy.

As for universalization, Portugal notes with satisfaction the current membership of 157 States Parties to the Convention. This is an important achievement. However, efforts must continue until full universalization is completed.

Mr President,

Last year, Portugal hosted a Seminar, in Lisbon, attended by senior officials of all the Portuguese Speaking African Countries as well as Timor-Leste, which was an important opportunity for stock-taking and sharing of experiences in implementing the Ottawa Convention.

We are studying ways of further following up to this positive experience, so we can assist others in fulfilling the Convention's goals and work for a better and safer world

Thank you, Mr President.