



สถานเอกอัครราชทูต

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**Statement by His Excellency Mr. Suwat Liptapanlop, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand at
the High-Level Segment of the First Review Conference of the Mine Ban Convention or
the Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World,
3 December 2004, Nairobi, Republic of Kenya**

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of His Excellency Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra, Prime Minister of Thailand and the Royal Thai Government, I wish to offer my sincere gratitude to the Government and the people of Kenya for their warm welcome and for hosting the historic First Review Conference of the Mine Ban Convention, or the Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World. I wish to commend in particular the leadership and the initiative of His Excellency President Mwai Kibaki as well as the hard work of the President of the Conference in making this special and historic Conference a success.

The fact that this important Conference is taking place in Africa, the continent that is most affected by the anti-personnel mines and that a great number of Leaders from Africa as well as elsewhere from all corners of the globe are participating testifies to the commitment on our part to make this Summit a historic landmark to free the world from the scourge of landmines. I am encouraged that African countries are playing an active role and, in this connection, I warmly congratulate Ethiopia for being the latest State Party to the Convention.

Mr. President,

Anti-personnel mines are a terrible scourge that have stolen children from their parents, taken husbands from wives, wives from husbands, and destroyed the livelihoods of countless families.

Fourteen years ago, Vichien Prasartchit, a Thai farmer from Si Saket province on the Thai-Cambodian border, was picking bamboo shoots for living when a landmine blew off his lower right leg. Even today, as he and his five children continue to till the soil and forage in the forests for their livelihood, they remain in mortal danger from anti-personnel mines in the ground, not knowing if their next step will be their last. Lives of innocent civilians like him remain to be threatened not only in Thailand but also in the rest of Asia, the Middle East, Central Asia and more particularly in Africa. All in all, almost half of the countries in the world remain affected and contaminated.

Millions and millions of innocent civilians continue to suffer from landmines that have indiscriminately and prematurely taken the lives and futures of many. The number of mine victims in need of assistance and care remains high. There is a need to expedite their reintegration into mainstream society to enable them to become assets to national growth. There is a need to return this contaminated land into fertility and economic use. There is a need to make every effort to bring humanitarian and development assistance to these people and their land.

Mr. President,

Individual actions, however, are simply part of the solution and no single country can be expected to deal with the landmine problem alone. It is time to act together to put an end to the problem. Not only will clearing mine-contaminated land open up new economic opportunities and enhance development, but cooperation in mine action could also serve as an effective measure for confidence building among neighbors and between countries in different regions.

While plans and priorities of individual countries are necessary to address mine-related problems, close partnership and shared experiences between States as well as with NGOs and international organizations are essential parts of the solution. It is imperative that mine action becomes a part of the regional agenda so that countries can better help one another through cooperation. In this regard, each and every country has a role to play. Countries with technical expertise or available resources should render support to the mine action efforts of those in need.

Thailand is happy to acknowledge that, seven years ago exactly today after the Convention was signed and only after five years since its entry into force, the Convention has gained increasing acceptance and its implementation has progressed considerably in all areas. But that is not a cause for complacency for Thailand or any of us in the international community, not even for one single moment. Much more needs to be done. On our part, during Thailand's Presidency, we have spared no efforts in the areas of universalization, victim assistance, resource mobilization and other elements of the Convention. I will also recommend to the Thai Cabinet to initiate new programme of assistance for mine victims to provide them with employment and return them to normal life in society. But we know it as well as you do that however we do it, it can never be enough. Thailand will continue to work and cooperate with the international community in all areas, including the idea of setting up the Global Fund for Humanitarian Mine Action in order to ensure that the world will be a safer place for our children.

Mr. President,

As the result of this historic Summit, we wish to see the world safe from the scourge of landmines so that our peoples can live and work without fear. We wish to see areas contaminated by landmines transformed into fertile land that will help improve the livelihood of the poorest sectors of the society. We wish to see people getting better access to water, education and health care services, and traveling safely across all territories where mines were once major obstacles. We wish to see countries helping one another to advance a common goal. In short, we wish to see all sectors of the society and all parties in the global community working closely in partnership to realize a mine-free world.

I have every confidence in all of you as much as in all of us in Thailand that one day these wishes will become true.

Thank you for your attention.
