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**STATEMENT TO THE 1996 REVIEW CONFERENCE
OF THE 1980 UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION
ON CERTAIN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS**

**(to be delivered, on behalf of the Secretary-General,
by Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Director General,
United Nations Office at Geneva)**

Geneva, 3 May 1996

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to deliver this statement to the 1996
Review Conference of the 1980 Convention on Certain
Conventional Weapons on behalf of the Secretary-General of
the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Land-mines, and especially anti-personnel mines, are having horrendously destructive effects on individuals and communities around the world. Land-mines are not only killing and maiming, indiscriminately, tens of thousands of men, women and children each year; they are also ravaging communities and societies struggling to emerge from armed conflicts, above all in developing countries.

Mines impede durable solutions to humanitarian crises and the rehabilitation and reconstruction of conflict-torn societies. They hamper the repatriation and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons. They make potentially productive agricultural land unusable, and make the re-establishment of essential infrastructure and industry impossible. They deprive children and their families of basic health-care. They endanger the lives of peace-keepers and personnel of humanitarian agencies bringing humanitarian assistance to victims of conflict.

In sum, Mr. President, land-mines are weapons whose widespread use against civilian populations is indefensible and an affront to the human conscience.

I should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and those taking part in this Conference on the great efforts that have been made in the course of a long and sometimes difficult process. In some respects, progress has been made. Certain of the provisions of the revised protocol, such as the extension of scope of the Convention, the inclusion of provisions restricting the transfer of mines, and the clear attribution of responsibility for mine-clearance, are welcome. The prohibition of non-detectable anti-personnel mines - albeit with a long period of deferral - and the immediate ban on the transfer of such mines, is also important.

But I must register my deep disappointment that the progress achieved falls so far short of what I had hoped for at this Review Conference.

When the Review Conference convened in Vienna on 25 September 1995, only 14 countries were in favour of a total ban. (Seven months later, this number has risen to 34.) ^(now) It is increasing almost daily. This is in large part due to the work of the hundreds of non-governmental organizations which form the International Campaign to Ban Land-mines.

In this respect, the revised Mines Protocol does not reflect the groundswell of international public opinion. The revised Protocol fails to resolve some of the crucial issues. It will disappoint international public opinion, and, in particular, the hundreds of thousands of mine victims world-wide, some of whom are present here today.

I find it disappointing that, for example, States which accept binding obligations have not been able to agree on independent verification of their compliance.

There will be widespread disappointment that the international community recognizes the need for the eventual

elimination of anti-personnel mines, but is not ready to prohibit their supply.

There have been attempts to differentiate between "smart mines" or "good mines", and bad ones. Yet no mechanism, no contraption, can legitimize a weapon that inflicts such appalling, yet random, suffering on so many societies.

With its many shortcomings, the amended Protocol still represents a step forward in the development of international humanitarian law. It represents the common denominator of all States Parties, as is the nature of a universal document. Universality is essential. I recommend all states to accede to the amended Protocol.

The Conference of States Parties on the implementation of the revised Protocol will provide an annual forum for States to address the continuing proliferation of land-mines.

The United Nations and its agencies will continue to work closely with non-governmental organizations worldwide to seek to ensure that humanitarian considerations, that are all too often subordinated to military and geopolitical considerations, remain in the forefront of the minds of governments.

The United Nations will continue to strengthen its programmes of humanitarian mine-clearance in affected countries -- they require increased human, financial and technical support from all governments.

The next Review Conference of this Convention will take place in five years' time. Our estimate is that, by the year 2001, an additional 50,000 human beings will have been killed, and a further 80,000 injured, by land-mines. Furthermore, 10 to 25 million land-mines will have been added to the 110 million already uncleared.

Land-mines will continue to be used by the million, produced by the million and transferred by the million. Thousands of children will continue to suffer horrific mutilation. Thousands of

farmers working in fields will be blinded or crippled. Thousands of de-miners will continue to have to risk their lives every day to try to clear the world of the 110 million land-mines that already lie uncleared.

The impact which land-mines are having, both on the civilian population and on the economy as a whole in affected countries, is so appalling, so devastating, that a total ban on all anti-personnel mines is the only solution. That must be the aim of the next Review Conference.

We will work with governments, Member States and with non-governmental organizations to achieve this goal. We encourage all States immediately to enact national legislation prohibiting the manufacture, stockpiling, use or sale of land-mines. The world cannot wait for the eventual elimination of land-mines. They must be eliminated now.

Thank you.