

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Jonas Rudalevičius of Lithuania
at the Second Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the
Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on Their
Destruction**

4 December 2009

Madam President, Your Excellencies,

At the outset, let me join other delegations in congratulating you, Madam President, on your election. I also associate myself with the statement of Sweden on behalf of the European Union. Let me now make a few additional comments that are of particular importance to Lithuania.

This year is Lithuania's seventh anniversary of being a part of this global forum – a collective solution to end the human suffering caused by indiscriminate anti-personnel mines. This year is also Lithuania's fifth anniversary of being a mine-free country.

Even if we are small, we have learned a lot. We have joined those who believe that there is no place for antipersonnel mines in today's world. We have learned that a complexity of the security environment cannot justify holding or using these horrendous weapons. We have seen that antipersonnel mines are constant precursors to humanitarian disasters perpetuating poverty, desperation, and regional instability.

In 2004, Lithuania took immediate steps to destroy the all of its 4,000 stockpiled antipersonnel mines. However, despite the fact that we became a mine-free zone, mine action remains among our top priorities as we concentrate our efforts on international cooperation and assistance. From 2004, Lithuania contributed 85 000 euros to the mine action activities, most of it dedicated to the projects of mine destruction in Afghanistan. Starting from 2005, Lithuanian military engineers also provide demining and UXO destruction operations in the Lithuania-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in the Ghowr province of Afghanistan.

Madam President,

International disarmament is a multifaceted phenomenon. The achievements of the Ottawa Convention are impressive indeed. But that is not enough. If we want to address humanitarian problems caused by wars and internal conflicts in a comprehensive way, we need more tools. Lithuania strongly encourages using Ottawa's example to see disarmament through the humanitarian perspective. There are some encouraging signs in this regard.

First, Lithuania is impressed by the progress of the universalisation of the Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We also welcome the commitment by States Parties to establish an effective implementation mechanism for this instrument.

Second, Lithuania welcomes the establishment of a strong normative regime that prohibits use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions. We were among the countries that signed the Cluster Munitions Convention in December 2008. In November 2009, the President of the Republic submitted the Convention to the Parliament for ratification. At the same time, Lithuania recognizes the importance of the negotiations on Cluster Munitions within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and hopes for a quick agreement on a strong legally binding protocol.

Finally, Lithuania would also like to emphasize the importance of international efforts dealing with the problems caused by the illicit trade and excessive accumulations of small arms and light weapons. We were encouraged by the outcome of the Third Biennial Meeting on the UN Programme of Action in 2008 and are looking forward to continued progress as we approach the Fourth Biennial Meeting in 2010.

Madam President, honorable guests,

In conclusion let me reiterate our continued commitment to the universalisation and implementation of the Convention and to mine action as a whole. We also strongly call the international community to make further use of the model created by the the

Ottawa Process to address a wider problem of weapons that cause excessive humanitarian harm.

Thank you.