



**Slovak Republic**

Address by

Henrik Markuš, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva  
at the Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World: Second Review Conference of State Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction

Madame President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

It is great honor and pleasure for me to address the Cartagena Summit. Undoubtedly, it represents another crucial milestone in the process of implementation of the noble goals of the Ottawa Convention. Following the statement by the Swedish Presidency of the European Union, let me make some additional remarks from our national perspective.

Madame President,

The Second Review Conference has provided a unique opportunity to look back and make recapitulation of our achievements since the Nairobi Summit as well as identify areas where we have potential to do more in eradicating once and for all the scourge posed by antipersonnel mines.

Slovakia ranks among countries that have been so lucky as not to be contaminated by antipersonnel mines. Having met our obligations stemming from the Ottawa treaty in an expeditious way, we have focused our contribution to those areas where we are efficient and effective, where we have experience and means to add substantial value into efforts of the international community in the fight against this atrocious weapon.

The details of the Slovakia's contribution to the cause of total and definite elimination of the scourge of antipersonnel landmines have been duly reflected in the ICBL's Landmine Monitor in previous years. Our demining activities in the period after the Nairobi Summit, mainly in Afghanistan and Iraq have placed a small nation such as Slovakia to the biggest contributors to mine action. The tribute for this goes to our engineers who demonstrated an exceptional commitment and expertise in clearance operations.

Madame President,

Slovakia remains committed to the cause of the Mine Ban Convention and to implementing it in those areas where we are best placed to fill a niche. Lately, our Armed Forces have established the so-called „Centre of Excellence“ for Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EoD). As of January 2010 this entity will be in position to provide up to six teams to international

humanitarian operations where EoD expertise is essential for their safe and successful performance.

The development and production of demining devices has traditionally been a domain where Slovakia brings an added value. The details on the famous "Božena" and other devices were provided several times in our submissions of our national reports under Article 7 of the Convention.

Moreover, there are military and civilian facilities in Slovakia possessing considerable capacities in the field of destruction of stocks of mines and other explosive devices. The emphasis is laid on use of environmentally friendly methods in the process of these sensitive activities.

Madame President,

Let me make some brief observations on the outcome documents of this conference. The challenges we face for the future are the best voiced in our Declaration and elaborated in detail in the Action Plan to be adopted. These documents correctly reflect the shift in the focus of the Mine Ban Convention. They represent both inspiration and direction for fulfilling our commitments in the next five years. It is our conviction that at this stage they represent the best possible compromise among a number of priorities that still pose a challenge to achieving a mine-free world within our generation.

Nevertheless, despite lack of due reflection on the issue of definition of antipersonnel mines and in this respect on sensitive fuses and antihandling devices we maintain that this debate should continue within the MBC. We hope that use of these devices for arming and equipping mines other than antipersonnel will not lead to another wave of humanitarian tragedies. However, in our opinion it remains a matter of principle that the deciding factor is the effect not the design of the mine.

Madame President,

In conclusion I wish to express my admiration to all actors engaged in preparations and successful work of this Conference. The appreciation of my government goes to you, Madame President, to the hospitable government of Colombia and all those who have been involved in its perfect organization. The United Nations and its agencies, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and a number of associated non-governmental organizations deserve special thanks for assisting the MBC States Parties in their deliberations before and during this prominent event.

I thank you for your attention.