

**Statement by the Head of Delegation of the Czech Republic
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Hynek Kmoníček**

Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World

30 November – 4 December 2009

Madam President,

I have the pleasure to address this Second Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction, the Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World. At the outset allow me to congratulate you, Ambassador Eckey, on being elected the President of this important meeting. We have full confidence that under your leadership the Conference will fulfill the hopes and expectations that many invest in this meeting. A lot has already been accomplished in the run-up to this conference, let me thank you and your team for the impressive amount of work that has already been done. Let me also thank the Government of Colombia for hosting this meeting. Colombia has provided another proof of its zeal in pursuing the goal of a mine-free world, and manifested the hospitality of its citizens and beauty of its country.

Let me stress that the Czech Republic fully supports the statement made by Sweden on behalf of the European Union. We especially appreciate the importance given to supporting the Mine Action by the European Union through its Joint Action in support of the universalization and implementation of the Ottawa Convention and we are happy to be part of the European collective efforts in this very area.

There are several areas where we still have to progress in implementing the Ottawa Convention. This meeting has been dealing with these very

concrete issues. Nevertheless, let me state here that the Czech Republic considers the Ottawa Convention a clear success. The Convention provides an indispensable framework aiming at the goal of total eradication of antipersonnel mines, of suffering and of loss of lives that are consequence to the use and existence of this weapon. Thanks to the efforts of States Parties as well as of non-governmental organizations millions of mines have been destroyed world-wide, production and trade in mines is dropping, destruction of stockpiles of antipersonnel landmines in many States Parties has been completed, and most importantly – the number of victims is decreasing. The Czech Republic highly appreciates the efforts of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian De-mining, the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance, the United Nations Mines Action Service, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent aimed at international coordination.

The Ottawa Convention keeps providing framework for our future activities. It is clear that we have to aim at universality of the Convention, which would enable us to get rid of the antipersonnel land mines completely and for good. Only zero antipersonnel landmines will lead us to zero victims. Mine clearing efforts, stock destructions, victim assistance, mine awareness education and other components of the mine action that proved to be so important in the past will have to get all the attention in the future as well. Our delegation is therefore fully supportive to the Declaration and the Action Plan of this Second Ottawa Convention Review Conference.

Madam President,

The Czech Republic is ready to continue to share its expertise and technologies with others in a spirit of co-operation to facilitate compliance

by States Parties. Also, we give special prominence to the reporting according to Article 7 of the Convention, a measure that significantly helps to raise transparency of the Ottawa process. In this connection, let me highlight that the Czech Republic decreased by half the amount of antipersonnel land mines that we kept for training purposes under the Article 3 of the Convention last year.

At the 7th meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention in 2006 my country voiced a voluntary commitment concerning the Horizont antivehicle mines that may be equipped with sensitive tripwire fuses. Let me now reaffirm this commitment. These devices are clearly a legacy of the past. They will be neither used in any military operation, nor produced, nor transferred. The number of these mines in the stocks of the Czech Armed Forces is very limited. The only use for these mines now and during the past decade is training of military personnel, which, we feel, is in the spirit of Art. 3 of the Ottawa Convention.

The Czech Republic can demonstrate its commitment to the goals of the Ottawa convention also by regular and significant voluntary contributions to mine action that amounts to more than 6 million USD, over the past five years. Last year we supported the Halo Trust demining in Afghanistan by 221 000 USD, the ITF mine action activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina by 136 000 USD, in Georgia by 261 000 USD, in Croatia by 139 000 USD, in Serbia by 73 000 USD, more bilateral and multilateral projects in Azerbaijan by 30 000 EUR, Jordan by 50 000 EUR, Georgia under the PfP Trust Fund by 83 000 EUR, the numbers are only for 2008. In 2009 and beyond we contributed, or made financial pledges, to projects by Halo Trust Fund for Afghanistan and Angola as well as to the ITF another 650 000 USD by now. Furthermore, during the past five years, the Czech Armed Forces have been involved in various Mine Action activities in Kosovo and Afghanistan. Despite current budgetary pressure, other Mine Action activities are being envisaged to be started possibly next year.

Madam President,

the Czech Republic reiterates its support to the goals of the Ottawa Convention and will continue to work towards them with concrete deeds. Our common goals are achievable. We will not stop until we reach them.

Thank you for your attention.