

Discussion

- A delegate asked what actions the OAU would take to put restrictions on multinational companies operating in Africa. He said that multinational corporations, who look to their own governments for protection, have created "African Syndrome" in the region.
- In response, Ambassador Bensid said that Africa is changing. While at one time multinationals could dictate, they cannot dictate anymore. The landmine issue, like everything else, will be decided by a civilian society that has adopted responsibility for its own decision.
- A representative from Antigua and Barbuda asked whether those states who fueled the discord in Africa are bearing any responsibility for the removal of landmines in the region.
- Ambassador Bensid responded that when the OAU met in Kempton Park, they stressed the historical responsibility of those states and discussed ways to pressure them to dedicate a percentage of their military budgets for landmine cleanup in Africa.
- A representative from Chile said it was essential to involve the UN organization in this process.
- A delegate asked whether the panel had any information on the difference in impact of anti-personnel mines on men, women and children.
- Ambassador Bensid said that in Angola, 70 percent of all landmine injuries are to women and children. In Mozambique, one in 324 people has been injured by landmines. These statistics show the enormous impact anti-personnel mines have had in the region, particularly since African women contribute in so many ways, including economically, to the welfare of their families.
- A representative from the Quaker UN office asked Ambassador Bourgois to lay out a scenario to show how the Conference on Disarmament could play a role in encouraging an anti-personnel mine ban.
- Ambassador Bourgois said the role of the Conference on Disarmament depends on agreement among its members. She suggested that some of the "difficult" countries might be willing to take a small step in the right direction by prohibiting the transfer of landmines. She urged dialogue with these countries and suggested it was important not to write them off. She added that NGOs have played, and must continue to play, a major role in the Conference on Disarmament. NGOs linked with media were very effective in the Nuclear Test ban.
- A representative from Madagascar asked for the panel's comments on the interaction of political, social and economic problems caused by landmines.
- Ambassador Bensid spoke about the impact of landmines in Angola and Mozambique, where peasants are not able to work their land. If a peasant is disabled by an anti-personnel mine, families suffer on a social, economic and psychological level.
- Ambassador de Talbott said the enormous impact of landmines was the reason that the OAS decided to be a mine-free zone by the year 2000.