

## DAILY PRESS BRIEFING



04/03/2006 – H.E. Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins, Chairman of the Forum of Mine Affected Countries (FOMAC) takes questions from reporters at the UN Headquarters, Press Briefing Room in New York in commemoration of the International Day for Mine Awareness and Mine Action, celebrated for the First time around the world on April 4<sup>th</sup> 2006.

"The decision to make April 4th International Mine Action Day shows the commitment of the international community to achieve more progress toward the implementation of the Ottawa Convention," said Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins. "In my country, mines still kill and maim while hampering recovery from a 30-year civil war", he added.

"Clearing land mines is not just a humanitarian issue but above all a development problem," Mr. Martins said. "Without it, we cannot transform affected lands into productive lands."