

Statement by Greece
(25-26.6.2015)

Mr. President,

Since our last update during the Third Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention at Maputo, we would like to take this opportunity to inform the participants of the meeting for the progress that has been achieved by Greece in terms of Article 4 Implementation.

The remaining stockpile of the APLs amounts to 643.309. From the above mentioned quantity, 452.695 APLs are stored in military warehouses in Greece and 190.614 in the warehouses of Videx in Bulgaria.

On March 9, 2015, the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs submitted a request to the Hellenic Embassy in Sofia for the return of the 190.614 APLs to Greece. From that time onwards the Greek and Bulgarian authorities are in close cooperation as regards a possible return of the APLs from the Videx warehouses to Greece. In this context, a meeting between Greek and Bulgarian experts in Sofia has been scheduled for later this month. Allow me to stress at this stage that cooperation with the competent Bulgarian authorities has been excellent and we are very grateful for their very forthcoming approach.

Mr. President,

As you know the process of destruction of our stockpiles was in full swing until 1 October 2014 when a deadly explosion, of yet uncertain origins, killed 15 people and destroyed the facilities of the Company in question, namely VIDEX.

From that day onwards the Hellenic Defence Systems are in close cooperation with the Ministry of National Defense, in order to find the proper solution to fulfill our obligations in accordance with the provisions of Article 4 of the Ottawa Convention.

In this spirit, on May 9, 2015 the Hellenic Defence Systems submitted a request to the Ministry of National Defence for an extension of the contract until the end of September 2015, in order to proceed to the necessary preparations for the destruction of the APLMs at its plant in Lavrio.

Mr President ,

The Hellenic Defence Systems have the necessary know-how and already possess the main equipment to destroy the remaining quantity of the stockpile.

Furthermore, upon completion of necessary preparations by the Hellenic Defence Systems in its facilities at Lavrio, a military committee of experts from the Hellenic Army General Staff, will inspect the plant in order to certify that the

destruction procedure of the APLs will be in accordance with the provisions of STANAG 4518, and relevant environmental legislation.

Mr President,

Despite challenges that we have encountered in fulfilling our obligation to destroy all stockpiled anti-personnel mines, which pertained to financial constraints, unforeseen circumstances, contractual and legal issues, we have never wavered from our commitment to implement the Convention's obligations, handled the issue with the utmost transparency and sincerity.

We would like to inform you that it is our intention to provide a timetable for the destruction of the remaining stockpile at the 14th meeting of the State Parties.

As regards the suggestion to include stockpile destruction in the Cooperative Compliance Committee, I would like to remind colleagues that the decisions recently taken in Maputo by consensus, namely the Maputo Action Plan, explicitly excluded Article 4 obligations from the Committee's mandate, which restricts itself to the prohibitions contained in Article 1.1 of the Convention and not Article 1.2.

Finally, we are ready to answer questions which partners may have and provide any clarification required.

Thank you Mr. President.