

STATEMENT BY CYPRUS
STANDING COMMITTEES MEETINGS
JUNE 2011, GENEVA

Distinguished Delegates,

Committed to achieving complete demining of the areas of the island which are under its effective control, the government of Cyprus began a process of demining in line with its *National Plan for the Implementation of the Ottawa Convention*. In accordance to the time schedule of Cyprus's National Plan, from the beginning of the process until today, 2.135 Anti Personnel mines, from 13 minefields that were laid down by the National Guard have been effectively removed and destroyed. The remaining 2.183 Anti Personnel mines laid in 5 minefields located in the vicinity of Dali, and Potamia villages are expected to be removed and destroyed within the deadline of July 2013.

Demining efforts are steadily progressing in the government controlled areas. The Mine Action Centre established by the National Guard monitors and regulates all demining actions, up to the point of successful disposal. All demining teams receive the necessary technical and financial support, whilst new technical means are easily acquired, if and when necessary. The same demining methodology has been implemented from the beginning and has proved highly effective.

National safety standards, which are in line with international standards for humanitarian demining, are applied. Mines are being destroyed in small numbers at a time, at a military testing range away from inhabited areas. All mined areas, located in areas, which are under the control of the government are perimeter-marked, monitored and protected ensuring the effective exclusion of civilians, again in accordance with international standards.

In addition, within the framework of the Government's initiative for clearing all minefields in the buffer zone, minefields and suspected areas that were laid down by the National Guard were cleared, mines were removed and destroyed, and the areas were returned to the legal owners for civilian exploitation. The government worked closely with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and the United Nations Mine Action Service for achieving complete demining of the entire area of the buffer zone, even of minefields not laid down by the National Guard. The UN's overall contribution has been fundamental towards the attainment of such a strenuous endeavor and as of April 2011 one minefield laid down by the foreign occupation forces remains to be cleared. In total 78 mined areas were cleared in the buffer zone, with the destruction of more than 27, 000 mines, releasing almost 10 kilometers of land.

Regrettably no relevant progress can be reported about the clearance of antipersonnel mines in the areas of the government's jurisdiction which are under military occupation, and over which the government is prevented from exercising effective control. The extent of contamination over those areas is not known.

Dear delegates,

Cyprus takes its international responsibilities very seriously, respects the letter of the Convention and values its contractual obligations stemming there from. Given the continuation of the well known situation on the island, the government is currently contemplating whether further measures might be considered as necessary for duly implementing its obligation under article 5, i.e "to destroy or ensure destruction of anti personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction **or control** as soon as possible but not later than ten years after the entry into force of this Convention".

Thank you for your attention.