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PERMANENT MISSION OF
THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
GENEVA

STATEMENT BY THE ALBANIAN DELEGATION
PROGRESS IN MEETING THE MBT ARTICLE 5 OBLIGATIONS

Meeting of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, MRE and
Mine Action Technologies

Geneva, June 2008

Thank you Mr. Co-chair.
Co-Chairs,

~~Excellencies~~, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

I have the pleasure in addressing you today to present the progress
Albania has ~~been making~~^{made} in meeting the Article 5 obligation and
respond to the questions put forward earlier by the Co-Chairs of this
Standing Committee.

Albania inherited the mine contamination from the Kosovo conflict in
1999, which left 15.25 million m² of border line between Kosovo and
Albania contaminated with mines and unexploded ordnance. These
ordnances directly impacted more than 25,000 people in 39 villages.
From 1999 to date, 34 people have been killed and 238 injured in
these areas, as a result of mines and unexploded ordnances.

Based on Albania's National Plan for Mine Action, by August 2010,
which is Albania's deadline to comply with Article 5, all mines and

support and explosive materials, as well as \$200,000 per year for victim assistance.

Regarding national capacities for Mine Action, the Albanian Mine Action Executive has been supported in the past, under the UNDP Capacity Building Project, with three international experts and its proper functioning was supported with due training, equipment and coverage of running costs. In July 2007, the Ministry of Defense and UNDP extended their Memorandum of Understanding for the support of AMAP until 2010. The UNDP currently provides administrative and financial support while AMAE is fully run by national professionals.

On clearance capacities, seven clearance teams have been trained and equipped by European Commission and US funded projects, implemented through UNDP and ITF, to constitute a national clearance capacity (NCC). This capacity is continuing the operations under the supervision of DanChurchAid, with funding from Canada, Germany and US State Department through ITF.

Furthermore, in compliance with its international and regional policies the Government of the Republic of Albania has recently decided to dispatch a company of 40 demining experts to its military contingent in the framework of EU led Althea operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the objective of assisting demining efforts in the country.

Co-Chairs,

I would like to use ^{indeed} this occasion to emphasize that Albania is fully committed and ^{is} has the required potential to be listed among the states that will achieve the fulfillment of the treaty obligations within the set deadlines however; we still need the support of the international community to achieve this important target.

I thank you.

The critical mass of ^{constructive} cooperation between Government, international community ~~and~~ local & international NGOs must be maintained, as we go towards the ^{achievement} ~~fulfillment~~ of the set objectives in 2010.

unexploded ordnances in the remaining Suspected Hazard Areas (SHA) within the Albanian territory will be destroyed.

As to date, some 13.85 million sqm have been rendered free of mines in Northeast Albania as a result of clearance and survey operations. The clearance operations restarted in April 2008, after the winter months break in the areas identified by the Albanian Mine Action Executive.

As of May 2008, about 1.45 million sqm remain yet to be cleared of landmines and unexploded ordnance in Northeast Albania. The projections for 2008 are to release about 700,000 to 800,000 sqm of contaminated land.

As mentioned above, Albania plans to complete the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in its mine contaminated areas by August 2010, *given sufficient funding* is available to conduct clearance operations.

One more consideration in this regard is that the remaining tasks are located in very remote areas so that special logistic arrangements are requested. Roads leading to some of those minefields are in bad conditions, adding to the logistical constraints of accessing those areas; also, a significant number of minefields are located high up in the mountain range, where weather conditions and heavy snow in the winter usually allow for limited operations in a number of months every summer. Therefore, a reduction in the clearance rates is possible if weather conditions don't allow implementation of the clearance activities as planned.

The Albanian Mine Action Executive has started since 2006 using the Land Cancellation method as part of the implementation of Risk Management procedures to support an efficient and effective removal of hazards and accelerate the clearance process.

The Government of Albania on its part has increasingly contributed to mine action in the period 1999-2008 and it can be valued at more than US\$2,100,000. Since 2004, the Government provides approximately \$100,000 per year in-kind contribution with helicopter