



## THE ALBANIAN APM STOCKPILE DESTRUCTION PROGRAMME

### Background

On 29 February 2000, the Republic of Albania ratified the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and in doing so accepted an obligation under Article 4 of the Convention to destroy its stockpiles of anti-personnel mines (APM) within four years. In April 2000, Mr Daniel Livermore, Canada's Ambassador for Mine Action, and the late Gen Gordon Reay, visited Albania in order to ascertain the viability of a programme to assist Albania in meeting this obligation. Canada subsequently contracted the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA) to develop a project proposal to destroy Albania's Anti-Personnel Mine (APM) stockpile.

In May 2000, following a NATO sponsored conference on regional mine action, the concept of a Trust Fund was developed and proposed by Canada at a meeting of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in September 2000. The instigation of the Trust Fund and the Albania Project were simultaneously approved at this meeting and sufficient funding was made available to allow the project to commence on 15 January 2001.

### Outline of the project

The project proposal recommended the establishment of demilitarisation process lines at the ULP Mjekës explosives factory for the destruction of the entire APM stockpile by reverse assembly. The TNT extracted from the mines was recycled by mixing with Ammonium Nitrate into a blasting explosive, Ammonite, for use in civil engineering projects to assist in the reconstruction of the Albanian economy. The process lines at ULP Mjekës provided a foundation for the development of an indigenous munitions demilitarization industry for the urgently required destruction of other ammunition stockpiles in Albania.

Albania's contribution to the project was the operation of the demilitarization facility at ULP Mjekës and transportation of the mines to ULP Mjekës from the estimated 57 storage locations throughout Albania. The project sponsors were Canada and Albania. In addition it was necessary for the Government of Canada, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) to conclude an agreement with the executing agency.

The NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA) was selected as the executing agency. NAMSA's governing body, the NATO Maintenance and Supply Organization (NAMSO) established a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Defence of Albania to cover NAMSA's involvement, and a contract with the Albanian Armed Forces for the loading and transportation of the mines to ULP Mjekës. NAMSA concluded a negotiated contract with the ULP Mjekës explosives factory at for the destruction of the APM stockpile. NAMSA also awarded a contract by competitive tender to EBV GmbH (Germany) for the design, production and installation of specialist machines required for the demilitarization of the APM stockpile.



## Goal

The primary goal of the project was to assist Albania in the destruction of the entire APM stockpile of 1,607,420 mines thus meeting the requirements of Article 4 of the Ottawa Treaty. Achievement of the goal required the following issues to be addressed:

- The provision of technical monitoring, transparency and accountability on behalf of the sponsors and donors.
- To enhance the capability of the existing indigenous demilitarization industry to undertake future work, including:
  - i) Training and capacity building.
  - ii) Development of technical regulations and demilitarization procedures.
  - iii) To enhance the capability of the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) in the safe transportation and handling of ammunition.

## Execution of the Project

The project to destroy Albania's anti-personnel mine stockpile was the first to be implemented under the auspices of the NATO Trust Fund for APM Stockpile Destruction. The project was conceived, designed, funded and implemented within a five month period which, in itself, was a remarkable achievement.

The project was implemented in 3 phases; planning, operations and post-operations. The planning phase was more protracted than envisaged which was primarily due to the inexperience of the Albanian contractor in the process of negotiation. The logistics element of the project was carried out by the Logistics Directorate of the Albanian Ministry of Defence, which fully met its contractual obligations despite a number of challenges. The mines were transported from 57 storage locations (132 sites) to the destruction facility, ULP Mjekës. A total of 41,000 were driven by the Albanian Armed Forces in the process without any incident.

The extension of the Planning Phase necessitated an increased tempo once demilitarization operations commenced but this did not compromise the target completion date. In order for the contractor, ULP Mjekës, to successfully complete demilitarisation operations considerable capacity building, training and assistance was required.

Verification and Monitoring was conducted in a formal and effective manner, which provided transparency to the project sponsors and donors. Demilitarization techniques were based on reverse assembly and recycling was a major aspect of the project. Over 1,100 tonnes of ferrous metals were recovered and recycled into construction materials for the repair of the country's infrastructure. 192 tonnes of TNT explosives were recovered and reconstituted into explosives suitable only for use in the commercial construction sector. The project provided socio-economic benefits in the employment of up to 70 personnel from an economically depressed area of the country where the unemployment rate is 40%.

A number of major challenges were encountered during the project, all of which were overcome. The last APM was demilitarised on 4 April 2002, a full two years ahead of the obligatory period in terms of Article 4 of the Ottawa Treaty. In total 1,683,860 mines were



destroyed against a predicated stockpile of 1,607,420. The additional 76,440 APM were discovered by means of a self-generated internal verification programme undertaken by the Albanian Armed Forces.

The project was completed within the schedule and budget with no accidents or incidents having occurred. All objectives of the Project Plan were achieved and, therefore, it must be considered to have been successful. A noteworthy success of this project was the ability of a number of different agencies to effectively cooperate to conduct demilitarization tasks in Albania. This project has also developed a sound base for the further development of an indigenous ammunition demilitarization capability.

## Conclusions

The benefits to Albania can be assessed as:

- Compliance with Article 4 of the Ottawa Treaty.
- Elevation in status within the international arena.
- Increased national and regional security.
- Employment and a reduction in social security expenditure.
- The enhancement of demilitarization capabilities.

## SUMMARY OF DEMILITARIZATION ACTIVITY.

### Demilitarization Activities

| Month         | Receipt          | Disassembly      | Bodies           | Detonators       | TNT Block        |
|---------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|               | Qty              | Qty              | Qty              | Qty              | Qty              |
| April-01      | 124,378          | -                | -                | -                | -                |
| May-01        | 91,696           | -                | -                | -                | -                |
| June-01       | 26,866           | -                | -                | -                | -                |
| July-01       | 116,867          | 139,690          | -                | -                | -                |
| August-01     | 135,366          | 196,830          | 40,770           | 1,040            | -                |
| September-01  | 228,096          | 192,748          | 62,132           | -                | 9,200            |
| October-01    | 108,500          | 225,118          | 57,051           | 130,006          | 520,995          |
| November-01   | 261,173          | 212,219          | 91,614           | 69,570           | 181,703          |
| December-01   | 159,012          | 208,750          | 146,808          | 74,000           | 234,605          |
| January-02    | 169,591          | 167,100          | 19,640           | 110,000          | 132,150          |
| February-02   | 157,592          | 197,574          | 594,109          | 125,200          | 138,900          |
| March-02      | 96,623           | 135,731          | 663,636          | 1,208,752        | 229,593          |
| <b>TOTALS</b> | <b>1,675,760</b> | <b>1,675,760</b> | <b>1,675,760</b> | <b>1,718,568</b> | <b>1,447,146</b> |

Note:

The 8,100 APM destroyed on SAZAN Island are excluded from this table.