



**REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA**  
**Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

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

**Ambassador Sejdi QERIMAJ**

**Meeting of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk  
Education and Mine Action Technologies**

**Geneva, 27 May 2009**

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Allow me to give you a brief update on the progress that Albania has made, since the Ninth Meeting of the State Parties, in implementation of Article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

As most of you know already, the mine problem in Albania is a result of the Kosova crisis in 1999 and a total area of about **15.25 square kilometers** of border line between Kosova and Albania were initially identified to be contaminated with mines and unexploded ordnances. This contamination directly impacted the lives of more than 25,000 people in 39 villages of Northeast Albania. From 1999 to date, 34 people have been killed and 238 injured by this threat, with the last accident in 2005.

As a result of clearance and survey operations carried out by several international demining organizations, about **14.49 square kilometers** have been released as free of mines and unexploded ordnance. A total of **11,775 anti-personnel mines** have been found and destroyed in these areas. Since 2004, the clearance operations are carried out by "Danish Church Aid" with local demining capacities and under monitoring and coordination of the Albanian Mine Action Executive. The progress of clearance operations has been made thanks to the great support of the international donor Governments and organizations such as the United

States, Germany, the European Commission, Switzerland, France, Turkey, Norway, Sweden, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Canada and the International Trust Fund of Slovenia.

In 2009 only, as of May, some 96,979 square meters of land have been cleared while 45 anti-personnel mines, 2 anti-tank mines, 6 unexploded ordnance and 125 cluster munitions have been found and destroyed.

The residual contaminated area in northeast Albania as to date is about 0,76 square kilometers, out of which 0.27 square kilometers are contaminated only with landmines divided in **11** mined areas. The clearance capacities this year consist of 1 technical survey and 7 manual clearance teams. The operations are funded by the US Department of State and Germany through the International Trust Fund of Slovenia with equipment support from the European Commission through UNDP.

The Albanian Government through the Ministry of Defense continues to support the programme by providing free of charge explosive materials and stand-by medical evacuation service by helicopter in order to ensure safe clearance operations in accordance with the International Standards for Mine Action.

The strategic objective of the National Plan for Completion is to complete the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in the mined areas in Albania by the end of 2009 and the Programme is fully committed to achieve this target, which is well ahead of our August 2010 deadline under Article 5.

*Distinguished Co-Chairs,*

I would like to use this occasion to remind again that Albania will be hosting on 8-9 October 2009, a South East Europe Regional Workshop in preparation of the Second Review Conference. The Workshop is part of the Initiative of the European Union Joint Action. We are honored to invite the States of South East Europe, donors and relevant international and non-governmental organizations, so please mark this event on your agenda.

Lastly, on behalf of the Albanian Government I would like to express our appreciation to the international community for the continuous support and trust to the Albanian Mine Action Programme. Thanks to this support we can soon accomplish our main mission to **"Return a mine free land to the people"** and also be proud of contributing to another success for the Convention.

Thank you for your attention.