

Statement by the delegation of Belarus

Mr. President,

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Republic of Belarus and the European Union continue their cooperation in the framework of the project entitled "Destruction of PFM-1 series ammunition in Belarus".

It is my pleasure to inform States Parties about joint activities of Belarus and the European Union to launch the mentioned project.

On 30 June 2010, the European Commission announced a new tender to select a contractor to implement the project "Destruction of PFM-1 series ammunition in Belarus".

On 14 July 2010, the European Commission proposed to the Belarusian side to sign the Addendum to the Financing agreement between the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the European Commission on implementation of the project "Destruction of PFM-1 series ammunition in Belarus", dated 22 January 2008. The proposed Addendum to the Financing agreement was signed by Belarus and entered into force on 24 August 2010.

The operational phase of the Project should not exceed 28 months.

A sufficient number of qualified bidders participated in this tender and on 19-21 October 2010 the EU Evaluation Committee was held in Kyiv, Ukraine. Upon result of this meeting the Evaluation Committee selected an appropriate company as a contractor for implementation of the project.

The Belarusian side expresses its gratitude to the EU for its tremendous efforts to assist Belarus in destroying its PFMs stockpiles. We respect a policy and procedures applied by the EU during the realization of projects on rendering the technical and financial assistance to other countries. I would like to indicate that the Belarusian authorities have excellent level of cooperation with our partners from the European Commission in the framework of the project.

Belarus is ready to put a maximum of efforts for successful completion of the joint project which realization will allow us to carry out of our obligations under the Ottawa convention.

In particular, the Belarusian authorities involved in realization of the project are prepared to provide full support and assistance to the Contractor to implement its task within time frameworks approved by the European Commission and Belarus.

The destruction of APMs of PFM-1 type is considered as a unique problem within the Ottawa Convention. The Republic of Belarus had no possibilities to accomplish the destruction of the stockpiled PFM mines without the assistance of the international community. Such an understanding was reflected in many documents, adopted by the meetings of the States Parties to the Ottawa Treaty, including those, adopted by the Second Review Conference held last year in Columbia.

The PFM-1 mines were designed to be disbursed by different types of delivery system, e.g. canisters, rockets and cluster bombs launched by helicopters, amongst others. Their specific design does not allow them to be either safely neutralized or disarmed. A version designated PFM-1S is also produced, which is designed to self destruct starting approximately 24 hours from arming.

PFM-1 mines are comparable with the cluster munitions.

Types of ammunition units	Number of mines per unit
KSF-1 Canister	Total 72 mines (in 4 clusters)
KSF-1S Canister	Total 64 mines (in 4 clusters)
BKF-PFM-1S Canister	Total 156 mines (in 6 clusters)
9M27K3 Rocket warhead	Total 312 mines (in 12 clusters)

Although the injuries they produce primarily result from the explosion, there are different toxic chemicals released into the environment. This represents a

special problem for destruction, and a potential danger to the surrounding population and the environment.

The Belarusian authorities, European Commission as well as independent experts concluded that contained incineration and contained detonation are the most appropriate and environmental friendly methods for the destruction of the PFM-1 series ammunition, and that a total solution (destruction of all explosive and contaminated components) should be employed.

During the implementation of the project in Belarus the Contractor is going to use the method of confined explosion through contained detonation.

Destruction method must result in an irreversible destruction of the PFM-1 mines and its explosive content.

PFM-1 mines have never been destroyed nor dismantled on an industrial scale. This may create unexpected challenges and difficulties during the future project.

Destruction process shall comply with the legislation of Belarus, International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and best practices in this field, and European safety and environmental standards, of which the most restrictive shall apply.

There are some specific requirements for the Destruction Site design in order to guarantee that PFM-1 mines can be treated safely, and that adequate safety measures, including the construction of a heavy roofed and barricaded structure for the ammunition processing building, are considered in order to avoid any harmful impact on personnel, population and/or environment in the case of an undesired arming and/or detonation of the ammunition.

The releases to the environment, as well as any solid waste shall comply with the appropriate ecological standards.

The upper-mentioned tasks should be resolved during the realization of the destruction project in Belarus.

The Belarusian side will inform States Parties about any new developments on this topic according to mechanism established within the Convention.

Thank you for your attention.