

Official Statement

to the “Eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Anti Personnel Mine Ban Convention”, Phnom Penh, Cambodia November 28, 2011

by

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Honored Mr. President,

Distinguished Representatives of the States Parties,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, first of all, to express my pleasure of being here in Phnom Penh these days to represent the Government of Albania in this important Eleventh Meeting of the State Parties of the APM Convention and have the opportunity to address this meeting.

I would like to also express my gratitude to the organizers of this event and especially the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia for the excellent arrangements as the hosting country.

Allow me as well to thank all the States Parties to the Convention for their support offered during the Albanian Presidency of the 10-th Meeting of States Parties of Mr. Gazmend Turdiu.

Distinguished Representatives of the States Parties,

After a decade of hard work and commitment, by benefiting during those years the loyal support of the international community, Albania completed the clearance of its contaminated areas with landmines and cluster munitions, originating from Kosova conflict, a couple of years ago as you know.

This great achievement means a safer life, now, for the people of those areas of Albania who don't live any longer in the presence of that constant threat. The cleared areas are now contributing to the overall wellbeing of the Albanian people and creating larger opportunities for their further development.

Albania is now engaged in the implementation of a large country's program for the destruction and demilitarization of surplus ammunition and the clearance of hotspot areas which have been created from random explosions of ammunition in some depots in Albania. The Albanian Armed Forces conducted emergency surface clearances of these "hotspots", but these were not conducted based on International Mine Action Standards at that time. All those incidents have been accurately recorded over the last years and this facilitates the clearance work to be done.

After the compliance with the article 5 of the Convention, the Government of my country is now making use of the mine action capacities in the work for the clearance of these hotspots in Albania. The Albanian Mine Action Executive (AMAE) has changed into the Albanian Mine and Munition Coordination Office (AMMCO) and it is also mandated to coordinate the Hotspots clearance activities. This transfer process is coordinated by Ministry of Defense, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Trust Fund (ITF), Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and other partners, based upon a respective Memorandum of Understanding.

I use the opportunity to appeal to the international community to continue to support the Albanian government in the efforts to eliminate this last threat.

Thank you!

