

Article 4

Mr. President,

As it is the first time we take the floor, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of your duties and to commend the way in which you are presiding over our deliberations.

Since our last statements to the 11MSP in Cambodia last December, as well as the Meeting of the Standing Committee in May, progress in terms of continuing the destruction of the APLM stockpiles had been slow due to the legal proceedings between the Greek State and Hellenic Defence Systems (EAS). More specifically, in May we announced that the main proceeding of the Athens Administrative Court of Appeals would take place on 27 September 2012. However, due to unforeseen circumstances which were independent from the case at hand, the proceeding did not take place at the aforementioned date and the case was deferred for the second half of 2013.

Given this development and considering the commitment of the Ministry of Defence to reinstate the destruction process of the remaining APLMs as soon as possible, a Ministerial Decision was signed at the end of November 2012 which puts the whole process back on track.

Following the above, the competent authorities will immediately start negotiations with "EAS" in order to agree on the terms of a modified contract. During the negotiation between the two sides, which should take place in the next few weeks, the two sides will agree on a new time schedule, as well as on the modalities of the destruction process.

In the meantime, the Greek Armed Forces have proceeded to the concentration of the 953,285 stockpiled anti-personnel mines in a single military ammunition warehouse, so that destruction can proceed immediately once the green light is given from the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. President,

Since its accession to the Ottawa Convention, Greece has spared no efforts to comply with all its obligations. With regard to our obligations emanating from Article 4 of the Convention, we have always addressed the complications which have arisen with the utmost transparency and sincerity. These complications should not in any way be construed as a deliberate failure or lack of willingness to comply with the Convention's obligations, but rather as a hurdle, due to unforeseen circumstances further exacerbated by the objective and unprecedented economic difficulties which our country is facing.

Finally, Mr. President, we would be ready to answer questions which partners may have and provide clarification if required.

Thank you Mr. President.