

6/12
AM

**Statement by Lithuania at the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties to the
Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer
of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

Geneva

3-7 December 2009

Mr. President,

Since this is the first time the Lithuanian delegation takes the floor, I would like to congratulate you on your election to this post and assure the full support of the Lithuanian delegation in your leadership of this Meeting. Lithuania associates itself with the general statement by the European Union and would like to emphasize certain issues that we regard as particularly important on the issues of the Stockpile destruction and Cooperation and assistance.

This year marks Lithuania's ninth anniversary of being a part of this global forum – a collective solution to end the human suffering caused by indiscriminate harm by the anti-personnel mines. This year marks also Lithuania's seventh anniversary of being a mine-free country.

With joining the convention, Lithuania took immediate steps to destroy the all of its stockpiled antipersonnel mines. However, being a mine-free State, mine action remains among our top

priorities as we concentrate our efforts on international cooperation and assistance.

Lithuania has emerged as a donor state only around 2004 and a substantial part of our international assistance was channelled to projects related to international mine action, including activities related to reduction of harm caused by UXOs and ERWs (*Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, and Afghanistan*).

Lithuanian delegation sees the problem of non-compliance and the way we have to deal with it as two-folded – from one side, as it is stated in the Convention, the States Parties are responsible for their stockpile destruction obligations. This obligation should be included in national programs of the respective countries and reflected in the national legislation. Financial and technical resources should also be allocated to implement this provision. Furthermore, a consistent reporting to other States Parties of the Convention on the steps taken, problems arising and assistance needed should be undergoing.

But there is another side of the coin – stockpile destruction, like the clearance, represents a considerable financial, technological, material or human resources challenge for the State, therefore cooperation and assistance by other States in a position to do so

is sometimes even of the crucial importance in order to overcome the challenge.

Lithuania remains convinced that although the essential responsibility remains with the States Parties concerned, other stakeholders, in particular - the donors, could and should assist in many ways and thus make the difference. Both – States Parties giving and receiving assistance – should place an emphasis on the obligation to cooperation with a view of ensuring full and prompt implementation of agreed assistance programs.

Therefore Lithuania calls for possible donor countries to further assist affected States with clearly demonstrated needs for external support for stockpile destruction, responding to priorities for assistance as articulated by those States in need , including through investigation and development of technical solutions to overcome the particular challenges associated with destroying PFM mines in an effective, sustainable and environmentally sound manner.

In conclusion let me reiterate our continued commitment to the universalization and implementation of the Convention and to mine action as a whole.

Thank you.