

29 November 2005

**STATEMENT BY THE TURKISH DELEGATION
ON MINE CLEARANCE**

Mr. Vice President,

Turkey joined the Ottawa Convention in March 2004 and, in keeping with its relevant provisions, submitted its initial national report in October 2004 and a second report in April 2005.

With this presentation, we aim to provide an update of the progress made since Turkey joined the Ottawa Convention.

Aware of its obligation under the Ottawa Convention to clear mined areas by 2014, Turkey set up a Mine Action Commission on the 9th of September 2003 under the Southeast Anatolia Project Administration.

At present, mine clearance at the national level is being conducted by the Turkish General Staff. A Specialized Mine Clearance unit has been created to carry out mine clearance. This unit has protective outfits, mine clearance dogs, manual and mechanical clearance equipment at their disposal.

As for the future, there is a plan to create a National Mine Action Authority and a Mine Action Centre. After the creation of a National Mine Action Centre, National Mine Action Standards will be set in compliance with IMAS.

Mr. Vice President,

In order to meet its 2014 deadline, Turkey has developed a Mine Action Work Plan. In accordance with this plan, the 510 km long mined area with 615,149 mines on her 905 km border with Syria will be cleared under the management of the Ministry of Finance by way of outsourcing. Seventeen million US Dollars have been invested in this project to clear a strip that was mined between 1956 and 1959 against illegal border crossings.

In 2005, approximately 3500 m² have been cleared, with 892 anti-personnel mines physically removed and destroyed. So far, 16,957 anti-personnel mines in a surface area of around 67,500m² have been cleared.

It is important to point out at this juncture that some of the mines cleared are those laid by the PKK/KADEK/KONGRA-GEL terrorist organisation. Although the locations of mines emplaced by the terrorist organization are not precisely known, they are being secured and cleared as detected. Thus, in certain regions, the public can only be warned of the potential danger of terrorist mines.

Thank you, Mr. Vice President.