

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
ON MINE CLEARANCE
(AGENDA ITEM 11.C)
(TUESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2007)**

Thank you Mr. President,

Allow me first to underline the importance Turkey attaches to the full implementation of the Mine Ban Convention. The mine clearance obligation of Article 5 is one of the central provisions of the Convention and Turkey will spare no effort in order to meet her 2014 deadline.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to provide some updates on Turkey's mine clearance activities. In our Article 7 2007 report, we have reported 983.166 emplaced landmines. This figure includes 818.669 emplaced anti-personnel landmines and 164.497 anti-tank mines.

The "Specialized Mine Clearance Unit" of the Turkish General Staff continues its mine clearance activities. This unit has protective outfits, mine clearance dogs as well as manual and mechanical clearance equipment at its disposal.

According to Turkey's "Mine Action Plan" plan, the 510 km long minefield on the border with Syria will be cleared in conformity with the relevant Governmental Decree. Seventeen million US Dollars have already been earmarked for this project to clear a strip that was mined between 1956 and 1959 against illegal border crossings.

I would like to announce that mine clearance activities are being carried out at two border points between Turkey and Syria. The clearance activities at Akçakale border point have been carried out by the Turkish Armed Forces and were completed in July 2007. Regarding Nusaybin border point, mine clearance activities will start soon and I hope to give you an update during the Standing Committee meeting.

Turkey's endeavours for the establishment of a "National Mine Action Centre" under the auspices of the Office of the Prime Minister, commenced two years ago are coming to an end. The "National Mine Action Centre" will include representatives from relevant authorities at national level, such as the Ministries of Justice, Interior, National Defence, Foreign Affairs, Finance, National Education, Health, Transport, Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Labour and Social Security, and Environment, as well as the Undersecretariat of Customs, the Administration of South-Eastern Anatolia Regional Development and the Turkish General Staff.

In our Article 7 Report submitted in April 2007, we have already given the information that Turkey cleared and destroyed 19.033 anti-personnel mines by way of on-site destruction. Since then, this figure has risen to 19.213 anti-personnel mines.

I thank you.