



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE & THE OTHER
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Statement on Stockpile Destruction

Madam President,

As it is the first time we take the floor under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of your duties and to assure you of our delegation's full support in your endeavour

We would like to take this opportunity to provide information on the progress that has been achieved by Greece with regards to the implementation of Article 4 since our last update during the 16th meeting of the States-Parties of the Ottawa Convention in Vienna.

Madam President, Dear Colleagues,

The Hellenic Defence Systems (HDS) have already successfully undertaken the demilitarization of 18.000 mines. Furthermore, the destruction of an additional 27.000 APLMs has been scheduled to take place in the upcoming days. These APLMs have already been transferred to the warehouses of HDS at the Lavrio Plant. The pace of destruction that has been followed thus far allows for the demilitarization of the APLMs stockpile to be concluded within the timetable presented by the Greek Delegation at the 16th meeting of States Parties, notwithstanding, of course, any future unforeseen circumstances beyond our control.

With regard to the 190.574 APLMs which are stored at the Videx facilities in Bulgaria, the HDS has obtained from the competent Greek Authorities the necessary certificates in order to proceed to their transfer back to Greece .

The Bulgarian Authorities have been duly informed and requested to provide assistance in order to ensure that all the necessary measures will be taken for the facilitation of the loading of the mines and the subsequent escort of the trucks until the Greek-Bulgarian borders.

At this point, I would like to seize this opportunity to stress that cooperation with the Bulgarian Authorities has been excellent and that we are grateful for their very forthcoming approach.

With regard to the discrepancy of the 2 APLMs you mentioned in your preliminary observations, Madam President, it is due to the fact that 190.574 APLMs, and not 190.572, remain stored at the Videx facilities in Bulgaria. The Republic of Bulgaria informed us by the Verbal Note No. 04-06-162 dated December 1, 2017, that "... 2 APLMs (M16 type) were discovered during subsequent sanitizing of the affected area and were stored in the Videx JSC warehouses".

Please note that the same number was mentioned in the annual Transparency Report submitted in 2018 as well as in our statement during the 16 MSP in Vienna.

As far as paragraph 11 of your preliminary observations is concerned, Madam President, I would like to note that in our Statement at the 16MSP there is no direct reference to the quantity of APLMs which have been destroyed. Moreover, there is no discrepancy between the APLMs stockpile as declared in our current annual Transparency Report and in our statement delivered at the 16 MSP.

Madam President, Dear Colleagues

Greece is in full compliance with its obligations stemming from the Maputo Action Plan and in particular with the provisions of Actions 5 and 6, as we regularly provide updated information, in a transparent and sincere manner, on our ongoing efforts to destroy the remaining stockpile of APLMs.

This full compliance is unfortunately not clearly reflected in the wording used in the programme of the Intersessional meeting with regards to the Stockpile Destruction, and in particular in the use of the term "non-compliance" when referring to the States that have missed their Article 4 deadlines.

Madam President, Dear Colleagues

The Maputo Action Plan refers to States that have not fulfilled their obligations within the period provided by Article 4 as States that have "missed their deadlines", not as "non-compliant" states. The importance of this differentiation is also made clear by the fact that such delays are kept outside the mandate of the Cooperative and Compliance Committee, which was adopted by consensus in Maputo, and is restricted to the prohibitions contained in Article 1.1 of the Convention, excluding those in Article 1.2. Stockpile destruction is therefore not addressed as an issue of non-compliance, but rather as an issue of missing a timetable, the one provided by article 4. Finally, Madam President, this is a distinction you rightly made when you presented the priorities of your presidency at the 16th MSP in Vienna, when you referred to States that have missed their Article 4 deadlines.

Madam President, Dear Colleagues

From its inception, this forum has had the comparative advantage of adopting a purely humanitarian approach. Preserving this approach has safeguarded the credibility of the Convention, and has acted as a shield against the politicization of this forum's deliberations. It is therefore of crucial importance to keep a clear distinction between different cases of non-fulfillment, especially when intent is a differentiating factor.

With this in mind, I would like to reiterate that the Hellenic Republic fully recognizes the obligations emanating from the Ottawa Convention, and that - despite the challenges which we have encountered - we have never wavered from our commitment to the Convention's implementation.

Thank you