

## **Intervention of the representative of the Ukrainian Mine Action Coordination Center**

Dr. Vitaliy Shved at the SCE on APLs stockpiles destruction

(Geneva, June 24, 2004)

**Dear Distinguished Co-Chairs!**

**Ladies and Gentlemen!**

Destruction process if managed appropriately and effectively may demonstrate impressive results, which would not be so cost-consuming in comparison with other directions of mine action. Expeditious destruction of a large APLs stockpile may be regarded as a confidence building measure in the regional security context and initiate the domino effect, which would increase ultimately the number of states-parties to the Ottawa Convention.

Ukraine as a signatory-state of the Ottawa Convention highly appreciates the fact that the issue of APLs stockpile destruction is given serious consideration during the intersessional work.

Ukraine has a strong intention to become a State Party in the foreseeable future. International assistance for a efficient, cost-effective and environmentally safe destruction of PFM type mines would be most helpful in securing the accession of my country to the Convention.

From the Ukrainian perspective discontinuity in APLs destruction in Ukraine would be undesirable for our fruitful cooperation with Canada and EC

Ukraine has inherited from the former Soviet Union a large stockpile of military ammunition (more than 240 depots) including 13 depots retaining PFM and 17 depots retaining PMN APLs. In this context we has accepted the proposal of the Canadian government to provide assistance for the destruction of our APLs stockpiles.

In this context I have the privilege again and again to thank Canada, together with the Netherlands, Poland and Hungary for allocating financial resources to carry out destruction of 400 thousand APLs of PMN-type in Ukraine. This project started in 2002 with the aim of disassembling the mines using industrial facility in Donetsk . On May 27 2003 the last PMN mine was destroyed. A good performance, showed by the mentioned Ukrainian facility, provides a very convincing argument for its eventual use in the destruction of existing PMN stockpiles of other countries in the region.

Although the PMN project is a positive achievement in our common efforts, it should be kept in memory that the PMN-type APLs make up only 7% of the whole Ukrainian APLs stockpiles. The PFM-type APLs destruction remains the major challenge.

The main problem which has to be solved by Ukraine pursuant to the obligations under the MBT is APLs destruction. Ukraine has almost 6 mln. mines of PFM-type in stockpiles and, as such, is the fourth largest stockpile holder in the world after Russia, China and USA.

My aim today is to very quickly provide an update on the status of PFM mine destruction in Ukraine. Considerable amount of PFM mines in stockpiles may be destroyed at the warehouses by using mobile equipment, which excludes the necessity of hazardous freight transportation through densely populated territory of Ukraine, provides the possibility to avoid risk for the environment and population.

The PFM mine is a technically challenging mine to destroy. Its liquid explosive gives off toxic gases when it is exploded. It is probably deteriorating in storage (the explosive is corrosive and in some cases may be leaking into the fuse assembly). It cannot be removed from its container without arming it. After armed it cannot be disarmed. Besides, there are 3 types of its delivery systems (artillery, Air Forces and

engineering systems). Some of these delivery systems may increase the technical challenge. All of PFM mines are at the end of their safe life.

At this juncture practical initiation of the PFM destruction project in Ukraine will be quite helpful and productive to ensure our progress in ratification process. PFM destruction presents the major challenge due to the highly toxic liquid substance used as explosive in these mines. Therefore the choice of the proper technology for PFM elimination should be made to allow environmentally safe, cost-effective and expeditious destruction of large amount of these mines.

From its part Ukraine makes necessary steps enabling the ratification of the Mine Ban Treaty by Ukrainian legislative body.

To organize cooperative work on mine action in Ukraine the Ukrainian Mine Action Coordination Center UMACC was established in January 2004. One of the main reasons and tasks of its work is to organizationally support Ukraine to be a State Party of the Ottawa Treaty and the liquidation of APL stockpiles in Ukraine and its neighbors. Just now in Ukraine discussions are underway about possible destruction of Byelorussian PMN APLs at the Donetsk facility

With the EC financial support and under EC control, the first phases of PFM trials in Ukraine were successfully completed by summer 2003. We finished a big job and got very important information about PFMs. As one of results shows, an open burning or detonation are not acceptable for ecological reasons. Liquid explosive mine filler of VS-6D (BC-6Д) type, as well as possible products of its degradation, detonation or burning, - all belong to the first class of hazardous substances in accordance with the Ukrainian standards.

Second phases will be finished by the autumn this year. As a result of evaluation, we are waiting to get a realistic, safe and low cost idea on what methods should be applied to destroy this type of APL.

### **Our next steps**

- Finalizing the 2nd phase of evaluation
- Make a decision about the method of destruction
- Organization of tender procedure
- Evaluation of bids
- Signing contracts
- Creating necessary facility or facilities
- Starting destruction by Spring 2005

How much time the destruction will take? We remember about 4 years limit, but you can calculate yourself: 5,94 mln. mines – approximately 4000 mines per day, or 3 mines a second. We have to deactivate 239 tons of high toxic explosives in these mines and to disassemble 5,953,004 mines with a total weight of 3,265 tones in 3 types of ammunition, totally 30,935 canisters. Really a huge job.

Our expectation is that whatever technology is finally selected it should be used in any country that is holding these mines, first of all – Belarus and Russia.

UMACC with NGO partners, particularly ICBL, are trying their best to speed-up the formal sending of the draft of ratification package of the Ottawa Convention to the Ukrainian Parliament. But the Ukrainian Government is now waiting for an official guarantee from donors regarding technical and financial support for a mine destruction.

In conclusion of my statement, I would like to thank GICHD Sponsorship Program, which enabled my participation in this meeting.