



**PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
GENEVA**

Thank you Madame Co-Chair,

Greece signed the Mine Ban Treaty on December 3rd, 1997. It concluded its internal procedure of ratification by Parliament in 2002 and deposited its instrument of ratification on September 25th, 2003. The treaty entered into force on March 1st, 2004.

Allow me Mr. Co-Chair, first of all, to underline my country's unwavering commitment to meeting its obligations provided for by the provisions of the Convention on the Prohibition, of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Greece does not produce, nor engage in the supply or transfer of antipersonnel mines. In fulfilling its obligations my country has already completed de-mining operations in well above 70% of the areas mined with anti-personnel mines, in less than half the maximum time period of ten years provided for clearance of mined areas by article 5 of the Convention.

Unfortunately, we regret to inform you that we were not in a position to complete the destruction of our stockpiled antipersonnel mines within the four year period provided by article 4 of the Convention and before the deadline of March 1st, 2008.

Following complex and time consuming procedures, which were further delayed by changes intervened, in the mean time, in the relevant national legislation, the project of APLMs stockpile destruction has been assigned to a specialized private company, namely the Hellenic Defense Systems, SA.

The final draft of the contract between the Greek Ministry of Defense and the Hellenic Defense Systems SA is undergoing audit and legal review at the State Audit Council, as it is provided for by national legislation.

In the mean time, pending the audit and legal review, the stockpiled APLMs have been assembled in a number of sites, always under the control of the MoD, in order to facilitate and speed up their collection and transport by HDS. At the same time necessary financial resources have been provided for and earmarked for the destruction project.

At this stage an exact timetable cannot be determined. And this despite the fact that Greek competent authorities are aware of Greece's obligations under the Convention, as well as of the need to complete destruction of stockpiles as soon as possible.

Madame Co-Chair, allow me once again to reassure states parties and interested NGOs that my country will spare no efforts to destroy its APLMs stockpile and to carry out that destruction in the best feasible time frame.

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY