

**PERMANENT MISSION
MISSION PERMANENTE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
DE LA REPUBLIQUE DE TURQUIE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AUPRES DE L'OFFICE DES
OFFICE IN GENEVA
NATIONS UNIES A GENEVE**



**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
DELIVERED
AT THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON MINE CLEARANCE, MINE
RISK EDUCATION AND MINE ACTION TECHNOLOGIES
(22 JUNE 2010)**

Distinguished Co-Chairs

I congratulate you on your assumption of the Co-Chairmanship. I can assure you of my Delegation's full confidence and support.

Today, I should like to provide a brief update on the process of mine clearance activities.

In our initial Article 7 Report submitted in 2004, location of anti-personnel mined areas according to their types, quantities and dates of emplacement had been indicated in detail, with a breakdown at provincial level. I may remind in this context that at present, borders with Greece and Bulgaria in the West, as well as the border with Georgia in the East are now mine-free.

As of June 2010, there remain 979.280 laid mines in Turkey, of which 164.466 are anti-tank mines. Accordingly, the number of laid anti-personnel land mines is 814.951. All mined areas are addressed and marked accordingly, as indicated in our Article 7 reports.

At present, the bulk of remaining anti-personnel mines lay in the border with Syria, which had been emplaced in the 1950s, with a view to curb smuggling and illicit trade in that era. Therefore, mine clearance activities in the borderline with Syria, which is the longest land border of Turkey stands as the priority. The national plan is to start with the Syrian border as such, and then to continue with the borders with Iraq, Iran and Armenia, in the provinces indicated in our initial report in 2004.

Currently, the Law Numbered 5903 on “The Tender and Mine Clearance Activities along the Border between Turkey and Syria” is adopted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on June 4, 2009. The Law provides the necessary legal basis for mine clearance activities along the said border. It enumerates several options that include the possibility of requesting the services of the “NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency” (NAMSA), a well-known international institution with the relevant expertise and the most recent techniques available. In a nut-shell, the Ministry of National defence is taking the necessary steps for a comprehensive programme and timelines of clearance, in collaboration with NAMSA, to comply with the deadline set for 2014.

In the meantime, and as we shared in previous meetings, we have been proceeding with complementary mine-clearing activities at four separate border check-points between Turkey and Syria:

a. In accordance with the relevant decisions taken at the meetings between respective Turkish and Syrian authorities, mine clearance, in an area of 38.500 square meters in Kilis, Çobanbey district was finished.

b. Activities for clearing mines in an area of 663.800 square meters within Gaziantep, Karkamış district started through service agreement undertaken by a private company. The activity is planned to be finished approximately by the end of 2010 or by early 2011.

c. “The Protocol Regarding Mine Clearance Activities to be carried out by the Turkish Armed Forces around Akçakale border crossing” was signed on 30 January 2007 to clear landmines, within the framework of broadening the Akçakale check-point. This is an area of 7.175 square meters. The clearance activities were completed in July 2007. The cleared area is now under the authority of the Undersecretariat of the Customs.

d. “The Protocol Regarding Mine Clearance around Nusaybin Check-Point” was signed on 6 December 2007. In line with this Protocol, under the auspices of the Governorship of Mardin, the tender agreement was signed on 14

March 2008 and the mine clearance of an area of 200.000 square meters was completed in 2009.

As I mentioned before between the border of Turkey and Syria some regional mine clearance activities have been accomplished, and some are on progress.

The big issue is the start of the mine clearance activities in this border. Because the laid mines in this border covers the main part of the total, the activities will be model for the remaining small part.

Last but not least, we shall be sharing an update on the state of affairs in the Meeting of States Parties in this November.

I thank you, Co-chairs.