

**Statement of the Delegation of Romania to the Standing Committee of Experts on the Status and Operation of the Ottawa Convention**

**Geneva, 11 May 2001**

**Check against delivery**

Distinguished Co-Chairmen,

Distinguished participants,

As representative of one of the most recent States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, I am pleased to be here today and to share with you some of the measures undertaken by now and the prospective for full implementation by Romania of the provision of this important document.

At the outset, allow me to clearly state, once again, that Romania is fully committed to implement in due time all of the Convention provisions. Although for my country the Convention came into force only few days ago, on 1st of May 2001, as prove of their determination and seriousness, the competent authorities were already engaged in preparing the ground for its implementation well before this term.

As a first step in this process, an inter-departmental working group has been set up. The activities of this body are developing in two main directions.

Firstly, the main aim of this body is to complete an accurate assessment of the number and categories of anti-personal mines that Romania possesses. This process is well underway. The fact that Romania has put in place several years ago unilateral national moratoria first on production and later on export of APLs, turned to be an advantage in the process of implementation. Nevertheless, we found that the recounting and verification of the national APL stockpiles is a time consuming activity, as not only one but also few other institutions were dealing with or possessing this type of weapon, in accordance with competencies entrusted with in the past.

This stage is almost completed and quite soon we will be in position to present a comprehensive assessment of the quantities and types of mines that Romania is in possession of.

Distinguished Co-Chairmen,

As a matter of transparency, allow me to present to States Parties some preliminary information and conclusions of our work in the APL issue.

Romania does not have minefields on its national territory, as an outcome of a long-standing restrictive and responsible policy All APLs are stored in stockpiles, under a safe and strict control of the competent authorities.

Moreover, as a result of the unilateral moratoria on production and export, the aggregate number of APLs is around one million-off, much smaller in comparison with assessments and figures circulated by some experts and organizations involved in Mine Action.

Providing wide transparency on the Ottawa Convention implementation process is and will be a standing policy of the Romanian authorities.

From a technical point of view, a helpful factor for the stockpiles destruction process is that the overwhelming majority of Romanian APLs are of average complexity, being similar to the models referred in the presentation provided yesterday by the distinguished delegation of Italy. The number of MSS type Leaping Splinter Mines, very similar to the Valmara 69 type, accounts for only a very small proportion of the total aggregate number of Romanian APLs, while for an other specific type of APLs, these are normally stockpiled in separate unassembled components.

Finally, I would like to use this opportunity to strongly underline the fact that Romania does not possess any number of PFM/PFM1 type APLs.

Distinguished Cochairmen,

Complementary to this first direction of action, the members of the working group are preparing the necessary legal and institutional domestic framework for destroying the stockpiles. For identifying the most cost-efficient and best practices in stockpile destruction, we consulted bilaterally with an important number of countries that already completed or are about to complete the process of destruction.

Based on their experience - and we would like to thank them once again for sharing it with us - the working group is preparing the draft of a Governmental Decision that will create the institutional framework for destruction of our stockpiles. The Governmental Decision on APLs elimination will be issued together with a concrete National Programme of Action that will establish in detail the responsibilities and deadlines for each and every Romanian institution involved in the process of implementation of the Ottawa Convention.

To this end, full use will be made of the commendable initiative of Switzerland to host next month - in Fribourg - a training course devoted to the management of the APLs stockpile destruction process.

Distinguished Cochairmen,

In conclusion, let me reiterate once more that the Romanian Government is fully committed to discharge its obligations under Ottawa Convention and to observe strictly the deadlines set up through this important document. Moreover, as we did today, we will keep you and the other States Parties fully informed on the measures that the Romanian authorities are undertaking for implementing the provisions of the Ottawa Convention.