

Statement

COL S. Luchina, General Staff, Corps of Engineers, Belarus

Mr. Co-Chair!

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen!

In my statement I would like to inform you about the landmine situation in the Republic of Belarus and the steps being taken by the Belarus government in this respect.

As you know Republic of Belarus is committed to sign the Mine Ban Treaty but has not done this yet because of the lack of ecologically safe technologies for destruction of the PFM-1 mines and lack of financial resources needed for their destruction.

Belarus has 4,5 million mines, 3,6 million of them are PFM-1 mines. PFM-1 mines can not be destroyed through open detonation because of the ecological constraints.

As has been confirmed by the recent UNMAS assessment mission the Belarus stockpile destruction problem can be solved only through the joint efforts of the international community as a whole.

Belarus has taken many steps toward finding a solution to our landmines problem:

- Belarus has provided the international community with all the data requested concerning the stockpiles of antipersonnel mines;
- Belarus hosted the First International Workshop on Humanitarian Demining and Mine Stockpile Elimination;
- Belarus hosted the UNMAS assessment mission;
- The Belarus government has had close and constructive co-operation with the Belarus Campaign to Ban Landmines and Landmine Monitor researchers;
- through the support of the Canadian government and UNDP representatives of Belarus Ministry of Defense actively participate in the major international events aimed at the solution of landmine problems;
- Belarus Ministry of Defense has started the elimination of the mines that could be destroyed by open detonation: more than 7 thousand of these mines have been already destroyed.

We welcome the recent efforts of the international community to conduct research on the technologies of PFM-1 mines destruction as the most dangerous mines that currently exist and to draw the attention of international donors to this problem.

In conclusion I would urge the international community to move forward with the research process. The PFM-1 mines have a limited shelf life that will soon expire. In order to limit the chances of a safety or ecological crises we must move forward quickly.

Thank you for your attention.