



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

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**STATEMENT
on Article 3
by Mr. Victor Moraru
Representative of the Republic of Moldova
at the 2006 meetings of the Standing Committees established by the States Parties to the
Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-
Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

Geneva, 12 May 2006

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Republic of Moldova was asked by the distinguished Co-Chairs to provide, in accordance with the Action #54 of the Nairobi Action Plan, details on intended purposes and actual uses of retained mines under Article 3 of the Ottawa Convention.

In this context, I would like to commend the GSOC co-chairs for focusing attention on Action #54, which commits States Parties to be transparent in implementation, as it concerns Article 3, in a manner that goes beyond what is required as part of the Convention's reporting obligations.

We understand the rationale behind the position of those States Parties which consider that the number of mines retained is less important than why mines are being kept and how those mines are being utilized. Nevertheless, we call on all States Parties to reaffirm the common understanding and to ensure that, if a State Party decides it must retain anti-personnel mines, the number of retained mines should be in hundreds or thousands or less, and not in the tens of thousands.

It is our strong believe that retaining vast quantities would undermine the Convention's objective of the total elimination of anti-personnel mines.

Distinguished delegates,

The Republic of Moldova completed the destruction of its entire anti-personnel stockpile four years ago, far ahead of the March 2005 deadline. As permitted by Article 3 of the Convention, Moldova has retained 249 remotely-controlled mines of Soviet manufacture. This amount of mines has been considered to be sufficient for training in mine detection, mine clearance, or mine destruction techniques.

No mines were transferred or acquired for training purposes.

As to quantity and type, Moldova currently holds 59 OZM-72 bounding fragmentation mines, 178 MON-100 fragmentation mines, and 12 MON-50 fragmentation mines. Mines are stored at the Moldovan Armed Forces storage site in Bulboaca, near the capital city Chisinau.

Since Moldova does not have the capacity to develop mine detection, mine clearance, or mine destruction techniques, all retained landmines were used exclusively to prepare military personnel from the Moldovan Armed Forces' Engineers and Peacekeeping Batalions, as well as from Infantry Batalions. It should be mentioned that no mines were destroyed during training activities. Training has been conducted by the Engineers Support Department of the Ministry of Defense.

For instance, within the period 1 January 2005-31 April 2006, 38 de-miners and 600 soldiers have been trained at the "Bulboaca Training Center" of the Ministry of Defense.

Soldiers from the Infantry Batalions have been given an elementary knowledge on handling of mines. Every individual soldier of the Engineering Batalion and selected personnel of the Peacekeeping Batalion "Blue Helmets 22", including officers have been trained in respect of all types of Anti Personnel Mines up to an acceptable level of NATO standards.

The 38 de-miners referred to above were prepared specifically for participation in the peacekeeping and stabilizing missions abroad. Eleven of them were directly engaged last year in de-mining and clearing activities in Iraq as part of the Stabilization International Forces. In July, 2006, another nine de-miners will be deployed in Iraq for the same purposes.

It is in this context I would like to inform the distinguished audience that the two Moldovan teams of humanitarian de-miners, which were previously involved in clearing mined areas in Iraq removed and destroyed, within the period 2004-2005, 57.427 various explosive devices, including APLs.

In the spirit of the Article 6 of the Ottawa Convention, Moldova will continue to remain involved in humanitarian mine clearance operations abroad as part of the international efforts to reduce the threat posed by landmines in specific regions. This will clearly require further training of the Moldovan military.

Provided that in the immediate future non-conventional training (like antipersonnel mine simulators and other relevant computer programmes) will be used instead of the conventional one, the Moldovan Government has decided very recently to destroy this year all retained landmines.

I am particularly delighted, Mr. Chairman, to be the first to make this announcement since this information was not yet available at the time when our annual Article 7 report was finalized.

According to the approved schedule, the process of destruction will take place between 17 May and 31 July 2006. The destruction of the 249 retained landmines will be carried out in a safe designated area at the "Bulboaca Training Center", by electric method, with respect of all environmental standards.

These actions are the testimony of Moldova's consistent policy in support of the *Mine Ban Treaty* and its main goal: a mine-free world. I would like to reiterate today, before the Standing Committees, that my country remains committed to implement all its obligations under the Ottawa Convention.

I wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to many actors involved in mine action, including the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), International Committee of Red Cross (ICRS), who have put themselves in the service of the Mine Ban Treaty.

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

Thank you for your attention.

