

8 May 2006

**STATEMENT BY THE TURKISH DELEGATION
ON UNIVERSALISATION AND THE QUESTION OF
« ARMED NON-STATE ACTORS »**

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time, I would like to congratulate you and the Co-Rapporteurs for assuming your duties within the Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention. You have my delegation's full support in your important tasks ahead.

Co-Chairs,

When we examine universalisation, we observe a positive, progressively evolving trend. We welcome the adherence of four more States, namely Ukraine, Haiti, the Cook Islands and Brunei Darussalam to the Convention since the 6th Meeting of States Parties in Zagreb last December. At this juncture, it seems that we should exert more effort on geographic regions that lag behind, in terms of accession to the Convention, as indicated by the Canadian Delegation earlier this morning. One hundred fifty one States is good, but not good enough. Turkey, for one, has 8 neighbours, 6 of which are not Parties to the Ottawa Convention. We welcome the statement by the Georgian Delegation this morning, in which we heard that Georgia is reviewing its policy vis-à-vis the Convention. Turkey shall continue to play its part with a view to raising awareness on the Convention in the neighbouring regions.

Co-Chairs,

My delegation would also like to seize this opportunity to reiterate Turkey's views on 'armed non-state actors'. It is indeed a fact of life that abidance of the 'armed non-state actors' using anti-personnel landmines by the provisions of the Convention is important for the full implementation of the Convention. However, it is also a fact of life that there is no agreed definition of the term 'armed non-state actors' and as such, this term is inclusive of terrorist organisations. In fact, despite our best intentions, some terrorist organisations try to use this blanket cover of 'armed non-state actors' for asserting a political and legal status and for international recognition, whether we want them to or not. This creates a conundrum and it is clear that there is no 'one size fits all' solution to this. It must now be evident that this issue has to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

The Ottawa Convention, as a legally binding document confers rights and obligations to the States Parties. However, the Convention does not contain any provision regarding 'armed non-state actors' and it does not authorise the direct participation of NGOs in the Convention's implementation. The Nairobi Plan of Action, which is a political document, assigns in Action No.46, as read out by one participant, certain tasks to the States Parties concerning 'armed non-state actors', provided that they are "in a position to do so" and "as appropriate".

Therefore, we take the view that when engagement with ‘armed non-state actors’ is contemplated, the concerned State Party should be informed and its consent would be necessary for such an engagement to take place. We happily note that this view is reflected in paragraph 17 of the Zagreb Progress Report, which was welcomed at the end of the 6th Meeting of States Parties in Zagreb.

I thank you, Co-Chairs.