



**REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA**

**STATEMENT BY Mr. Petrit KARABINA  
DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENSE/Chairman of AMAC**

**Standing Committee Meeting  
Geneva, May 2006**

Mr. Co-Chair,

Distinguished Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

**Good afternoon,**

I feel pleased today to say a few words on behalf of the Albanian Government on the progress that Albania has made in meeting the obligations deriving from the Ottawa Convention.

Albania inherited the mine contamination problem from the Kosovo crisis in 1999 where 15 million m<sup>2</sup> of border line between Kosovo and Albania were contaminated with mines and UXO-s by directly impacting more than 25,000 people in 39 villages. From 1999 to date, 34 people have been killed and 238 injured by this threat.

The Albanian Mine Action Committee and the Albanian Mine Action Executive in place since 1999 with the technical assistance of UNDP and financial support from the international community are working to adequately coordinate and monitor the mine action activities ongoing in the country.

In accordance with Action 19 of the Nairobi Action Plan and with UNDP support, Albania has developed a Plan for Completion that will enable us to meet our clearance deadline in accordance with Article 5 (1) of the convention. More specifically:

*The strategic goals of the Albanian Mine Action Programme as per Article 5 of the Ottawa Convention are to clear all high and medium impact areas by end of 2006 and to clear all other known mined areas by 2009. Taking in consideration the progress made so far we consider these objectives still*

*achievable within these target dates, assuming that the needed funding is provided.*

Toward the implementation of the Convention, Albania has provided national resources through the Ministry of Defense by providing free of charge the explosive materials and medical evacuation service by helicopter considered critical for safe clearance operations and in accordance with the International Standards.

As to date, more than 12 million m<sup>2</sup> of land, which means more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the total area, have been released through clearance and surveys by various international demining organizations working in Albania and handed over to the community for productive use. As a result of this clearance progress and also good coverage with mine risk education the number of mine accidents in the contaminated areas has dropped significantly in only two in 2005 and none for this year as to date.

Another 3.2 million square meter remain still to be cleared in order to ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in the mined areas under Albania's jurisdiction or control as per article 5 of the convention. In addition in keeping with action 20 of the Nairobi Action Plan our objective is to clear the areas with highest human impact by the end of this year, and all other known mined areas by 2009.

The Albanian Government has also maintained its commitment to stronger support the Mine Action Programme by taking several important steps.

The most important one is the recent ratification by the parliament of the Law on the implementation of the Ottawa Convention, as per article 9 obligation. We are also in process of finalizing the National Humanitarian Demining Law under Article 5 which I use the occasion to thank the GICHD for the technical assistance provided in drafting this law.

One of the main objectives of the Albanian Programme is also building of local capacities for demining and victim's assistance and good progress has been made in this regard so far, as reported in a previous session.

Mr. Co-Chair,

I would like to avail myself of this occasion to thank all donor community for the important support toward the Mine Action Programme in Albania during these years and express our hopes that this support will be further extended by recalling the Action 23 of the Nairobi Action Plan and in framework also of the UNDP Completion Initiative, for a successful completion of the programme by end of 2009.

Last but not least, on behalf of the Albanian Government I'd make an appeal to other countries state or non-state parties to the convention to make more efforts and commit together for a total elimination of mines as in this way we can contribute to a much better and safer world.

Thank you for your attention.