

**Statement by Greece at the 13MSP of the Ottawa Convention
Geneva (2-5.12.2013)**

Mr. President,

As it is the first time we take the floor, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of your duties and to assure you of this delegation's full support in your endeavours.

Since our last update during the Meeting of the Standing Committees last May, (27-30.5.2013), we would like to take this opportunity to inform the 13th MSP of the progress that has been achieved by Greece in terms of Article 4 Implementation.

Following the conclusion of negotiations between the Greek Ministry of Defense and the Hellenic Defense Systems (EAS), last April (29.4.2013), a modified contract for the destruction of the remaining 60% of the Anti-personnel mines was signed, opening the road for the continuation of the stockpile destruction process. As indicated in May, the destruction process will take place in the facilities of the Bulgarian subcontractor, "VIDEX".

On June 7th, the Hellenic Defense Systems (EAS) submitted all the relevant documents, including an end user certificate to the Ministry of Development, Competitiveness and Finance in order to re-launch the destruction process of APLMs at the facilities of the subcontractor VIDEX. In taking this process forward, a request for an International Import Certificate (IIC) was in turn submitted by VIDEX to the Bulgarian Ministry of Economy and Energy on July 2, 2013, resulting in the subsequent issuance of the relevant certificate by the Bulgarian competent authorities on October 17th 2013. On December 2nd 2013 the Ministry of Development, Competitiveness and Finance issued the export licenses. As a result, at this stage the only remaining pending documents which are required for the commencement of the shipment of the mines to Bulgaria are the transport licenses, which are expected to be issued by the competent Greek and Bulgarian authorities within the next few weeks.

Despite the ongoing financial crisis, which has resulted, inter alia, in delayed payments to employees of the 'EAS', and its consequent implications on the smooth operation of the company, we are now, as explained above, at the final stages of the necessary procedures and expect transport and destruction of stockpiled mines to begin in early 2014.

More specifically, with regard to the transport of the mines, they will be transported by a convoy of trucks, escorted by the Greek police up to the Greek-Bulgarian border. Once in Bulgarian territory and during the whole journey to the facilities of VIDEX, security will be provided by the Bulgarian side, in accordance with relevant Bulgarian legislation. At the VIDEX facilities, the mines will be counted and consequently the relevant documents of receipt will be signed by the representatives of the aforementioned company. At this point,

we would like to stress that we attach great importance to the safety and security of the whole transport procedure.

Mr. President,

We have, from the outset, addressed the complications which have arisen with the utmost transparency and sincerity. We remain committed to the process, and the implementation hurdles in the destruction process of our remaining stockpiles should in no way be construed as a deliberate failure or lack of willingness to comply with the obligations stipulated by the Convention.

At this point, I would like to make some additional observations, drawing from certain comments made during the discussion on compliance, both on Monday and this morning. From its inception, this forum has had the comparative advantage of adopting a purely humanitarian approach. This approach has been preserved through the years, thus safeguarding the credibility of the Convention and has acted as a shield against the politicization of its deliberations. In this respect, as far as our delegation is concerned, we are of the view that we should all refrain from turning this forum into a forum for finger-pointing, in which criticism becomes an end in itself. Specifically on stockpile destruction, the lack of compliance by States is not willful by definition; neither does it reflect a lack of political will. Practical and tangible hurdles may render the process very difficult. It is indeed regrettable that two previous speakers adopted rather simplistic and holistic approaches, by resorting to generalizations. The real perspective of the Convention is undermined when extreme measures are hastily invoked or proposed, without making a distinction between the qualitative differences of the various cases of non-compliance. As a result, the aim of upholding the credibility of the Convention is not safeguarded; on the contrary it is compromised.

Finally, Mr. President, we take this opportunity to thank the Norwegian and Nigerian delegations for their engagement as Co-Chairs on Stockpile destruction and look forward to a good cooperation with both Poland and Norway as we approach the Maputo Review Conference. We also extend our thanks to the Bulgarian government for its cooperation in the whole project. We stand ready to answer questions which partners may have and provide clarification if required.

Thank you Mr. President.