

Thirteenth Meeting of 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 2-5 December 2013

Statement by the Republic of Lithuania on agenda item 11h Consideration of the general status and operation of the Convention: Cooperation and Assistance

Mr. President,

As it has been mentioned in the statement this morning, this year marks Lithuania's tenth anniversary of being a part of this global forum – a collective solution to end the human suffering caused by indiscriminate harm by the anti-personnel mines. This year marks also Lithuania's ninth anniversary of being a mine-free country.

With joining the convention, Lithuania took immediate steps to destroy the all of its 4,000 stockpiled antipersonnel mines. However, the mine action remains among our priorities and we concentrate our efforts on international cooperation and assistance.

Lithuania has emerged as a donor state only around 2004 and a substantial part of our international assistance was channelled to projects related to international mine action, including activities related to reduction of harm caused by UXOs and ERWs in *Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, and Afghanistan*.

Current Lithuania's focus is to help Georgia and Afghanistan to clear their territories of explosives remnants of war, mines and UXO.

Since the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties Lithuania had allocated 6 000 USD to UNMAS, 2867 EUR to support APLC ISU Core work plan and 1000 CHF for the CCW Sponsorship Programme in December 2012.

The Government of Lithuania has already allocated 10 000 EUR for to *Explosive remnants of war clearance and medical rehabilitation support to Georgia project* (through NAMSA – Georgia IV) for 2013 and will further contribute as one of the lead nations in the project.

Lithuania remains committed to continue its cooperation with and assistance to Mine Action community through different governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, first of all - the EU, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), NATO, the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

Using this opportunity, I would like to call the countries with limited financial resources to continue sharing their technical knowledge and expertise, as this type of assistance is both valuable and desired.

Mr. President,

In the context of international assistance, let me say few words on the stockpile destruction. My delegation sees the problem of non-compliance and the way we have to deal with it as two-folded. From one side, as it is stated in the Convention, individual States Parties are responsible for their stockpile destruction obligations. This obligation should be included in national programs of the respective countries, it should be reflected in national legislation, financial and technical resources should be allocated to implement this provision.

Furthermore, a consistent reporting to other States Parties of the Convention on the steps taken, problems arising and assistance needed should be undergoing.

But there is another side of the coin – destruction, like the clearance, represents a considerable financial, technological, material or human resources challenge for the State, therefore the assistance by other States and Organisations in a position to do so is sometimes even of the crucial importance in order to overcome the challenge.

Lithuania remains convinced that even though the main responsibility lies with the States Parties concerned, other States Parties and stakeholders, in particular the donors, could and should assist in many ways and thus make all the difference. Both – States Parties giving and receiving assistance – should place an increased emphasis on the obligation to cooperation with a view of ensuring full and prompt implementation of agreed assistance programs.

Therefore Lithuania calls for the donors to further assist affected States with clearly demonstrated needs for external support for stockpile destruction, responding to priorities for assistance as articulated by those States in need. This includes both the financial support and the technical solutions to overcome the particular challenges associated with destroying the millions-large PFM-1 mine stockpiles in Belarus and Ukraine in an effective, sustainable and environmentally sound manner.

Thank you.