

# REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA



Address by Mr. Pavli ZERI  
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To be held at the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa  
Convention in Bangkok, Thailand  
From 15 to 19 September 2003

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

Let me first say that I am delighted to address this Conference on behalf of the Albanian Government. I wish to express, right from the start, our appreciation and most sincere congratulations to the Government of Thailand for the excellent conditions provided for this important conference.

The Republic of Albania considers itself as an active and generating factor for peace, security and stability in the region and at large. Albania was the 137<sup>th</sup> signatory to the Ottawa Convention, ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Albania in February 2000.

In the framework of the Ottawa Convention, the Republic of Albania has undertaken concrete actions and responsibilities regarding all questions related to the implementation of the convention on anti-personnel mines. In March 2000 the Republic of Albania possessed 1.6 million anti-personnel mines. With the assistance provided by the Government of Canada, Switzerland, Holland, United Kingdom, Belgium, Austria and the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency

(NAMSA), the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in the country was made possible 2 years ahead of our obligation. I take this opportunity to express our deepest appreciation to the above-mentioned countries for their contribution in this process.

**Since April 2002 the Republic of Albania does not possess any anti-personnel mines.**

In the framework of the Ottawa Convention, we strongly support the creation of common initiatives in the field of regional and international cooperation. We support the creation of the platforms and the engagement of all mechanisms, institutions and networks in the field of anti-personnel mines. We also assess as being important, the need for the exchange of information and the implementation of the best practices and experiences in this regard.

The Republic of Albania has also made remarkable progress in the removal of mines, laid during the Kosovo crisis, from its territory. Of the original 15.25 million m<sup>2</sup> land contaminated, less than 6 million m<sup>2</sup> remains today. We are committed to declaring Albania free from the effect of mines by the end of 2005 and removing all mines from Albanian territory in accordance with our obligations in terms of the Ottawa Convention. Since this year and with the support of our donors, Albania has in integrated humanitarian mine action plan, incorporating advocacy, demining, mine risk education, the physical rehabilitation of mine victims, as well as their socio-economic reintegration into society.

Once again, wishing you a very successful conference, allow me to thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, Dr. Surakijart Sathirathai and the other high representatives of the United Nations for the organization of this conference and for their contributions in the processes for peace and international security.

Thank you