

Statement
by Major General Sergei Luchina,
Chief of the Engineering Troops
of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus
at the 7th Annual Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the
Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of
Antipersonnel Mines and on their Destruction

Madam President,
Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all let me support voices of other delegations in connection with your election to the post of the President of 7th Annual Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention.

The Republic of Belarus fully shares the goals of the Convention and puts all possible contributions for the implementation of Nairobi Action Plan.

On this stage the most challenging task for Belarus is elimination of its existing stockpiles of APMs.

For these purposes by 2006 we have concluded necessary arrangements on international assistance. I would like to use this opportunity to express the gratitude of our government to donor states.

In February 2006 the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Belarus and NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency signed a Contract on the Destruction of TNT-containing POMZ-2, POMZ-2M, POM-2, PMN and PMN-2-series APM, prohibited under Ottawa Treaty.

On March 1, 2006 the implementation phase of the mentioned agreement was launched. The project is sponsored by Canada and Lithuania.

By now the following activities have been implemented in the framework of the project:

Destroyed by detonation:

- PMN antipersonnel mines – 45 225 pieces (99 % of total amount of the specified mines, that are subject to destruction),
- PMN-2 antipersonnel mines – 32 208 pieces (28 %),
- POM-2 antipersonnel mines – 25 212 pieces (44 %),
- Destroyed by removal of fuses and molding of cases at the Belarusian industrial plants – 77 642 pieces of POMZ-2, POMZ-2M antipersonnel mines (100 %).

In total, 61 % of TNT-containing APM has been destroyed.

Besides, 50 % of the total amount of OZM-72 and MON types were inspected. In course of this inspection auxiliary parts of APM's, designed for non-

command detonation explosion, were extracted and destroyed; Environmental monitoring of the demolition range is being realized stage by stage.

All mentioned actions are being carried out together with the NAMSA verification officer of the project.

Destruction of APMs in the framework of the project will be completed by the end of 2006.

The problem relating to the destruction of 3 371 984 PFM-1 cluster mines with liquid explosive is the most difficult task for Belarus from technological and ecological points of view.

In order to solve the problem on March 7, 2006 the Government of the Republic of Belarus has approved the project of international technical assistance "Destruction of munitions containing PFM-1 mines in Belarus", offered by the European Commission. On May 6, 2006 the Ministry of Defence on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Belarus signed a Statement of Endorsement to accept the European Commission technical assistance for the destruction of PFM-1 mines. Signing of this Statement of Endorsement enables the European Commission to launch an international tender for the selection of the Contractor to carry out works aimed at disposal of these mines through the ecologically sound technology. The European Commission is planning to finalise the tender in October 2006. All necessary arrangement within the project should be signed by Contractor until the 1st of January 2007.

Additionally we would like to inform that in 2006 more then 3500 UXO's were found and destroyed in Belarus.

According to the Ottawa Convention 6030 pieces of antipersonnel mines, namely PMN – 1500 pieces, PMN-2 – 1512 pieces, POMZ-2M – 1518 pieces and POMZ-2M – 1500 pieces retained for training.

More detailed information about antipersonnel mines in Belarus, under Article 7 of the Ottawa Convention, is submitted to UN Secretary General at the annual report.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, in conclusion I would like to present you a documentary film on implementation of the Ottawa Convention in the Republic of Belarus.

Thank you for your attention.