



**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
DELIVERED
AT THE NINTH MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES
TO THE MINE BAN CONVENTION
(AGENDA ITEM 12(A))
(GENEVA, 26 NOVEMBER 2008)**

Mr. President,

Turkey is a party to all major international instruments, agreements and arrangements on disarmament and arms control, and supports their universalisation, as well as their effective implementation.

In this framework, Turkey acknowledges the role played by the Universalisation Contact Group (UCG) which met today at lunch time. We thank the UCG Co-ordinator for the update he gave at the beginning of this session. Moreover, we welcome the visits paid by His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Al-Hussein, President of the 8th Meeting of State Parties, to those countries which have not yet acceded to the Convention, and we encourage further outreach efforts in this vein.

As a State Party which is neighbouring countries outside the mine-ban regime, we do not only pursue the principle of universalisation of the Convention from a humanitarian point of view, but also from a national security perspective.

Therefore, we try to maintain the “universalisation of disarmament regimes”, including the Mine Ban Convention, as a bilateral agenda item in our contacts with those countries in our neighbourhood, which have not yet acceded to the regime. We continue to highlight the importance of the principles and priorities of the Convention in our bilateral talks.

Furthermore, we have been informed by the Georgian authorities that they ratified the bilateral mine clearance agreement which was presented by Turkey to Georgia, even before our accession to the Mine Ban Convention. Let me remind you that on the Turkish side of the common border with Georgia there are not any landmines.

We consider all these bilateral efforts as modest but important steps taken by Turkey towards universalising the principles of the Mine Ban Convention, as they provide valuable opportunities for us to reach out to our neighbours.

I thank you Mr President.