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It is a pleasure to address the Forum for Security Co-operation in my capacity as the President of the Tenth 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.

As the world's largest regional security organization, the OSCE obviously has a role to play on matters that concern the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. The OSCE's role in this regard goes back more than a decade to the 204th plenary meeting of the FSC in 1997 when it was agreed that Member States would "consider measures for complementing (but not duplicating) the international community's efforts in relation to an effective solution regarding anti-personnel landmines". These measures include Member States submitting, on an annual basis, responses to the questionnaire on anti-personnel mines.

Since 2003, the OSCE has been part of global efforts to assist States in fulfilling their Convention obligations through its mine action programme in Tajikistan. Beyond Tajikistan, I am grateful for the efforts of the OSCE, in partnership with the International Trust Fund, to facilitate cooperation to address landmine and mine-related challenges in Central Asia. I would also like to acknowledge the role of the OSCE in seeking to enhance border security including through the OSCE Border Management Staff College. As parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, we have accepted that borders become actually more, not less secure, through the elimination of anti-personnel mines.

In addition to commending the OSCE for its ongoing efforts concerning anti-personnel mines and the destruction of other explosive hazards, my purpose in appearing before you today is to update you on the status of the Convention and to highlight Albania's role in the pursuit of the Convention's aims.

Let us recall some basic facts about the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or *Ottawa Convention*. The Convention was adopted on 18 September 1997 in Oslo. It was the product of the *Ottawa Process*, which featured a fast-track challenge to negotiate a binding instrument in a 15 month period, and, unique collaboration between States, non-governmental and international organizations.

The Convention was opened for signature in Ottawa on 3 December 1997. It entered into force on 1 March 1999 following the ratification or accession to the Convention by 40 States.

The purpose of the Convention is "to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines". It seeks to achieve this promise through the pursuit of four core aims:

- The pursuit of universal acceptance of the Convention's ban on the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines;
- The destruction of all stockpiled anti-personnel mines;

- The release for normal human use of all areas containing or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines; and,
- Assistance to the victims and survivors.

To date, 156 States have ratified or acceded to the Convention. That is, over 80 percent of the world's States have accepted that they shall never again, use, produce or transfer anti-personnel mines and that all stocks and emplaced anti-personnel mines be destroyed.

The States Parties have noted that “not only does the Convention's prohibition on the use of anti-personnel mines bind its 156 parties, but the Convention's norm of no-use also has enjoyed widespread acceptance by States not parties”. The States Parties have also recorded that “the use of anti-personnel mines remains stigmatized – as evidenced both by the rarity of new use and by statements made by many States not parties attesting to their agreement with the goals of the Convention, and their intentions to eventually join”.¹

Of the OSCE's 56 Member States, 46 are parties to the Convention. In keeping with the commitments made by States Parties at the landmark 2009 *Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World*, I would like to seize this opportunity to promote ratification of and accession to the Convention, in particular by calling upon the 10 OSCE Member States that have not yet joined our humanitarian movement to do so as soon as possible.²

The aim of destroying all stockpiled anti-personnel mines remains one of the Convention's great success stories. Of the Convention's 156 States Parties, 152 now no longer hold stocks of anti-personnel mines, either because they have completed their destruction programmes, or because they never held stocks.

Together, the States Parties have reported the destruction of approximately 44 million mines. I should note that the vast majority of these mines have been destroyed by 33 OSCE Member States which are parties to the Convention. Together, these 33 OSCE Member States have reported having destroyed approximately 37 million mines – or about 84 percent of all mines destroyed by all States Parties combined.

Concerning the aim of clearing all mined areas, 54 States Parties have reported anti-personnel mines in mined areas under their jurisdiction or control. Of these, 17 have now declared that they have released all known mined areas for normal human activity, thereby having fulfilled their obligations under Article 5 of the Convention. Amongst the OSCE Member States which are parties to the Convention, 5 have reported completion of mine clearance obligations³ and 8 are still in the process of implementing this aspect of the Convention⁴.

With respect to assisting the victims, 5 OSCE Member States which are parties to the Convention have reported that they are ultimately responsible for significant numbers – hundreds or thousands – of landmine survivors.⁵

That States Parties have agreed: to not forget the responsibilities to landmine survivors wherever they may be, to place greater emphasis on the fulfillment of the responsibilities by these States Parties and to providing assistance to them as necessary. The States Parties have further noted that “this focus has provided a useful framework for the work on victim assistance within the context of the Convention and has contributed to the introduction of implementation processes for victim assistance at the national level in several of these States Parties”.⁶

The States Parties have adopted some fundamental understandings concerning victim assistance. These understandings, which form the basis of their pursuit of the aim of assisting survivors, include the following:

- The States Parties have adopted a non-discriminatory approach, agreeing that “victim assistance efforts should promote the development of services, infrastructure and policies to address the rights and needs of all women, girls, boys and men with disabilities, regardless of the cause of disability”;⁷
- The States Parties have recognised that “victim assistance is a process that involves an age- and gender-sensitive, rights-based and holistic approach in which each component – emergency and continuing medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, and social and economic reintegration / inclusion – is essential (...)”;⁸
- The States Parties have agreed that “victim assistance does not require the development of new fields or disciplines but rather calls for ensuring that existing health care, social service systems, rehabilitation programmes, legislative and policy frameworks are adequate to meet the needs of all citizens – including landmine (survivors)”;⁹
- The States Parties have expressed that “victim assistance is more than just a medical or rehabilitation issue – it is also a human rights issue”;¹⁰
- And, the States Parties have embraced the concept of “inclusive development”, which is “development in which persons with disabilities participate as both actors and beneficiaries”¹¹ and which can be achieved through Inclusive development, using a so-called “twin track approach”.¹²

The States Parties, along with the international and non-governmental organisations that support them, have achieved a lot, but a number of challenges remain.

While support for the Convention’ norms is strong, the international community has expressed its alarm at new mine use in Libya. New deployments of mines in Libya run counter to the norms that are accepted by the majority of States. We should all be deeply concerned. The use of anti-personnel mines in Libya will have devastating effects on civilians, will obstruct economic development and reconstruction, and it will inhibit the repatriation of internally displaced persons.

We also face the challenge that attracting new adherents to the Convention has become difficult. In many regions, the top perceived barrier to accession appears to be related to border security. In this regard, I would highlight that 156 States of the world have accepted that they will ensure State sovereignty and the security of borders without anti-personnel mines.

I encourage OSCE Member States that are not yet parties to the Convention to consult with those that have joined, to learn from our experiences. Moreover, I would again refer to the good work of the OSCE Border Management Staff College which can assist Member States in border security. In the view of many, border security is achieved in a more effective way without anti-personnel mines than with them.

Another challenge that we face concerns stockpile production. While this remains a great success story, four States Parties – all of which are OSCE Member States – have missed their non-extendable four year deadlines for the destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines. Fortunately, I am pleased that, just last week in Geneva, Turkey reported that it has virtually completed its destruction

programme, having destroyed almost three million mines. Important progress was also reported by Belarus, Greece and Ukraine.

Concerning clearing all mine areas, the greatest challenge rests in maintaining interest in and support for a task which, for many States Parties, will take many years to complete. Amongst OSCE Member States, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the United Kingdom all have indicated that it will take them until 1 March 2019 to comply with the mine clearance obligation of the Convention. Tajikistan has a deadline to do so which falls on 1 April 2020.

These States need our ongoing encouragement to complete the task and many will require our assistance. For their part, these States will need to enhance efforts to strengthen national ownership, by increasing national contributions to Convention implementation, by obtaining a clearer definition of the task, and by constantly improving plans for implementation.

Concerning victim assistance, the challenges faced by many States in guaranteeing the human rights and full inclusion and participation of survivors and other persons with disabilities - ultimately include the full set of challenges, faced by developing countries in general. This means that there are factors, such as those related to good governance, national social and economic development, as well as wealth redistribution, that are simply beyond what one could expect a community of actors would address in the context of an international conventional weapons instrument. There are limitations to what can be expected. But there are also great opportunities to make advances.

Every State Party has a responsibility to contribute to overcoming the Convention's remaining challenges. Concerning Albania's own efforts to implement the Convention, I am pleased to share with you that, at the national level, we have done our utmost to destroy anti-personnel mines, to clear mined areas and to assist victims and survivors. At the international level, we have joined our efforts with others to promote universalization of the Convention, as well as to enhance cooperation and assistance, particularly with regard to victim assistance.

On 15 January 2001, Albania began destruction of its anti-personnel mine stockpile. This was no easy task given that stockpiles were located in 57 military depots throughout the country and that Albania possessed one of the largest stockpiles that had been reported by that time. However, by 4 April 2002, Albania completed the destruction of 1,683,860 mines. Our commitment to comply with this aspect of the Convention was aided by the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA), which served as the executing agency, and, with support provided by Austria, Belgium, Canada, Hungary, Norway, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Regarding mine clearance, Albania, following the Kosovo crisis in 1999, had to respond to a landmine and UXO problem. A total of 102 areas covering 15,250,000 square metres were identified as being contaminated by mines and / or other explosive remnants of war. Due to the combination of national ownership and partnership, Albania has been able to comply with its Convention obligations. With support provided by Canada, Denmark, the European Commission, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland and the United States, and, with demining efforts that spanned almost a decade, Albania was able to declare mine clearance completion in 2009.

With respect to landmine victims, mines and UXO, accidents in northeast Albania resulted in 34 deaths and 238 persons with injuries. There are also an estimated 500 other mine/UXO survivors throughout Albania, with these individuals injured as a result of accidents that occurred from the looting of the ammunition depots during the 1997 uprising.

Beginning in 2003, we sought to build the capacity necessary to better respond to the needs of landmine survivors and others who have suffered injuries and / or who may be living with disabilities. Some of our accomplishments include the establishment of a prosthetics workshop at Kukës Hospital, the establishment of a community based rehabilitation network in northeastern Albania, the initiation of a physical medicine and rehabilitation project, and, increased capacity at the National Prosthetic Orthotic Center in Tirana. In addition, in January 2005, Albania approved its first National Strategy on Persons with Disabilities. This strategy aims to improve the living conditions of all persons with disabilities, including landmine survivors.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those that stood by our side and assisted us in meeting our obligations in mine clearance, stockpile destruction and victim assistance.

When in 2009 Albania was declared a mine free country, we decided to give back. At the Second Review Conference in Cartagena, Albania presented its candidature and was elected to preside over the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, for the period 2010-2011.

In addition to the normal duties as Presidency of the Meeting of the States Parties, we committed ourselves to make victim assistance our top priority. In the pursuit of the victim assistance aim of the Convention, from 30 May to 1 June, we invited the international community to a symposium in Tirana on cooperation and assistance. I was heartened that approximately 100 experts and States Parties' representatives took part in this event, where we explored in detail the role of development cooperation in resourcing victim assistance, the importance of strengthening national ownership, and, the important linkages between the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Finally, with respect to universalization, Albania is doing its part, working in close collaboration with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, the International Committee of the Red Cross and Belgium, in its capacity as Coordinator of the Universalization Contact Group.

In particular, this year I am teaming up to promote the Convention with His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Al Hussein of Jordan. Prince Mired, who serves as the President's Special Envoy on the Universalization of the Convention, has visited the capitals of several States not parties to engage in a discussion on possible accession to the Convention. For my part, I have met with in Geneva with the Permanent Representatives of States not parties and I remain available to engage such States in their capitals. I am particularly heartened by the commitments made by two OSCE Member States – Finland and Poland – to join the Convention in or by 2012.

In addition, as a contribution to the Contact Group's lead on coordinating and developing strategies for universalization, in April this year, I hosted in Tirana the incoming and outgoing Contact Group Coordinators (Belgium and Canada), the Special Envoy, the ICBL, ICRC and the Implementation Support Unit for intensive discussions on universalization.

Excellencies, dear colleagues: If there is any single statement that sums up the status of the Convention to date, it is – progress has been made but challenges still remain. In the two decades since the global civil society movement emerged to call for the eradication of anti-personnel mines, much has been done to establish a new international norm, to clear mines, and to assist the victims. However, our work is not yet complete and I call upon the OSCE and its Member States to continue efforts to ensure that the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention ultimately achieves its mission.

¹ The Final Report of the Second Review Conference 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, Part II, Review of the operation and status of the Convention 2005-2009, paragraph 15.

² The 10 OSCE Member States that have not ratified or acceded to the Convention are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Finland, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Russian Federation, United States of America and Uzbekistan.

³ These five States are Albania, Bulgaria, France, Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

⁴ These eight States are Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

⁵ These five States are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Tajikistan.

⁶ The Final Report of the Second Review Conference 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, Part II, Review of the operation and status of the Convention 2005-2009, paragraph 101.

⁷ Ibid, paragraph 100.

⁸ Ibid, paragraph 106.

⁹ Ibid, paragraph 117.

¹⁰ Ibid, paragraph 68.

¹¹ World Bank. *Disability and international cooperation and development: a review of policies and practices*. May 2010.

¹² A “twin track approach” includes “inclusion of an active consideration of disability issues in the mainstream of development co-operation work”, and, “looking for opportunities to support more focused activities, including direct support to organizations of disabled people and to initiatives aimed specifically at enhancing the empowerment of people with disabilities”. See: Department for International Development, *Disability, Poverty and Development*. February 2000, 11.