

**PERMANENT MISSION OF TURKEY  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
GENEVA**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement by  
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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY**

At the  
**FOURTH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE  
CONVENTION ON PROHIBITION OF THE USE,  
STOCK PILING, PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER OF  
ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR  
DESTRUCTION**

**GENEVA, September 18<sup>th</sup> , 2002**

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Mr. President,

At the outset on behalf of my delegation, allow me to express my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the Presidency of the Fourth Meeting of States Parties. I am confident that under your able and time tested leadership and extensive experience in the field of disarmament, the meeting will be successfully guided through its challenging agenda.

Mr. President,

My delegation has aligned itself with the statement made by distinguished representative of Denmark on behalf of the European Union and we fully share the views and objectives expressed in this statement.

I also wish to avail myself of this opportunity to update the participating delegations about Turkey's latest activities regarding antipersonnel landmines.

In view of human sufferings and casualties caused by antipersonnel landmines, the international community has long been endeavoring to take effective measures in order to prevent their use. The resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly calling on member states to implement a moratorium on the export of antipersonnel landmines constituted an important part of these efforts since 1993. In light of these resolutions, Turkey unilaterally declared on 17 January 1996 a comprehensive moratorium on all antipersonnel landmines exports and transfers for a renewable term of 3 years.

Moratoriums on the export of antipersonnel landmines were superseded on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1999 by the entry into force of the Convention. The security situation in Turkey precluded her from signing the Convention at the time of its conclusion. Nevertheless, as an expression of commitment to the humanitarian objectives of the Convention, Turkey extended her national moratorium on the export and transfer of antipersonnel landmines on 17 January 1999 for another 3 years. When the duration of Turkey's national moratorium on the exports and transfers of antipersonnel landmines expired in January 2002, my country has decided to extend once again her moratorium, this time indefinitely, as an expression of her sincere commitment to becoming a party to the Convention.

Turkey also concluded agreements with Bulgaria in March 1999 and with Georgia in January 2001, with a view to establishing regimes for keeping the common borders free from these mines. We have proposed similar arrangements to our neighboring countries Greece and Azerbaijan. So far Turkey has cleared all the landmines on her side of the border with Bulgaria.

In 2001, Turkey unilaterally decided to initiate a project to clean all mines in certain areas. Following the completion of necessary activities concerning that project, mine cleaning action will begin and these regained areas will be transformed for civilian use in due time.

Regarding her activities in the international fora, Turkey contributed 50,000 US Dollars for the mine clearance activities in Bosnia Herzegovina, and the Turkish troops, stationed under the command of KFOR and SFOR participated in these activities. Turkey also funded the expenses of the Albanian Mine Actions Committee to carry out demining activities in the Northern border of Albania during the Kosovo conflict.

In the same vein, Turkey participated in the first meeting of the states parties to the Convention in Maputo in May 1999 as an observer: It will be recalled that at that meeting Turkey announced her intention to become a party to the Convention during the next decade. Turkey also participated in the second and third meetings of states parties held in Geneva and in Managua in years 2000 and 2001 respectively, as well as the two Intersessional Meetings of 2001-2002 period. During the last intersessional meeting under the agenda item entitled land mine clearance and stockpile destruction, members of the Turkish General Staff made a comprehensive presentation on activities of the Turkish Armed Forces.

Mr. President,

Regarding demining activities, I wish to bring to your attention that by August of this year Turkey has already cleared 10,875 mines and is continuing to do so. As soon as mines are detected during the mine clearance activities they are destroyed on site. Furthermore, Turkey has also established "Demining and Coordination centers", and formed "Demining Teams" as well as a national working group on matters for " Mine sweeping and demining".

Mr. President,

It is an honour and a privilege for me to reiterate at this Conference my government's firm decision to become a party to the Convention. Our intention, to this effect has already been made public on 6 April 2001, during the visit of the Greek Foreign Minister H.E Mr. Papandreu to Turkey. On that occasion, the two Foreign Ministers announced that Turkey and Greece would concurrently start the procedures that will make both countries party to the Convention. In accordance with the joint statement, while Greece would be initiating the ratification process of the Convention, Turkey was to start the accession procedures. Following the conclusion of these steps, the instruments of ratification would be simultaneously deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

At this juncture, I would like to report that the Convention has already been submitted to the Turkish Parliament for ratification. On 9<sup>th</sup> May of this year the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament approved the Convention and conveyed it to the General Assembly for final approval. The Convention has been included in the Agenda of the General Assembly. Today I would like to reiterate once again my country's determination to complete the accession process in the shortest time possible.

Mr. President, before concluding my remarks, I would also like to express our hope and expectation that the outcome of this meeting will further contribute to the common objectives of the international community to rid the world from the APMS by the deadline set in the Convention and to provide the necessary assistance to landmine victims.

Thank you Mr. President.

