

Statement of the Republic of Lithuania
at the Meetings of the Standing Committees of the Mine Ban Treaty

20 June 2011, Geneva

Dear Co-Chairs, distinguished delegates,

I am glad to address this Session of the Standing Committee of the Mine Ban Treaty. The friendly, transparent and co-operative spirit of the Ottawa Convention represents a much needed silver lining in the otherwise divisive and sometimes disappointing disarmament agenda.

For Lithuania the mine-free world starts at home and in our neighbourhood. On our 7th year as a mine-free country, mine action still remains among our priorities as we concentrate our efforts on the full implementation and regional adherence to the principles and objectives of the Ottawa Convention. The potential for regional cooperation is still far from being fully revealed in all areas of implementation.

Now let me turn to the direct topic of this session – stockpile destruction of anti-personnel landmines.

First of all, as a Co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction, Lithuania would like to thank Belarusian, Greek, Turkish and Ukrainian delegations for providing an update on the steps taken to implement the provisions of Article 4 on stockpile destruction. All four cases are at different stages of completion, but they still demonstrate the willingness to comply with the Convention.

We call on these countries to remain as transparent as possible and inform States Parties of the Convention on the way forward on a regular basis. Such information sharing would not only show the amount of progress in implementation, but would also flag the problematic issues, which might be overcome using expertise of other countries.

In order to prevent missing Convention's deadlines in the future, it is crucial to ensure regular information sharing on the process of stockpile destruction and consultations with partners at the earliest possible stage, long before the deadline for stockpile destruction is approaching.

Dear colleagues,

Lithuania remains convinced that even though the main responsibility to implement the Convention lies with the relevant States Party, the assistance from other stakeholders and in particular donors is vital and could make all the difference. Both – States Parties giving and receiving assistance – should place an increased emphasis on the obligation to cooperate with a view of ensuring full and prompt implementation of agreed assistance programs.

Therefore Lithuania calls for possible donor countries to further assist affected States with clearly demonstrated needs for stockpile destruction, responding to priorities identified by affected States, including through investigation and development of technical solutions to overcome the particular challenges, such as destroying PFM mines in an effective, sustainable and environmentally sound manner.

Thank you.