

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
DELIVERED AT THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS OF STATES PARTIES
OF THE MINE BAN CONVENTION
GENEVA, 23 MAY 2012**

Madame Co-chair,

Taking this opportunity, we should like to inform the States Parties on the ongoing preparations in Turkey with regards our obligations arising from the Article 5 of the Convention.

As we have indicated in previous MSP's and Article 7 reports, a great majority of anti-personnel mines are laid along the borderlines. Our western borders with Greece and Bulgaria, as well as the border with Georgia however, are mine-free.

Mine clearance along our southern border constitutes priority, in particular the borderline with Syria, which is the longest land border of Turkey. Along this border, we have a total of 613,715 mines, of which 163,825 are anti-tank mines and 449,890 are anti-personnel mines. The total number of mines in other areas add up to 363,448.

The "*Law on the Tender and Mine Clearing Activities along the Land Border between Turkey and Syria*" (Law no:5903) which entered into force on 16 June 2009, provides the necessary legal basis for mine clearing activities along the border between Turkey and Syria. On that basis, the Ministry of National Defense (MoD) is entrusted with the task of implementation.

Madame Co-chair,

The project not only entails clearance of mines in a safe and environmentally sound manner, but also entails the simultaneous establishment of a new physical border security system with the involvement of other sub-contractors. There are also various other technical and administrative details involved, which are being sorted out by an inter-agency coordination committee, through regular meetings.

Last but not least, allow me to elaborate on some details:

In the context of Syrian Border Mine Clearance Project, the preparations of the tender document for demining activities in the first tender region between Cizre and Çobanbey, stretching 527 km, were completed and 20 joint ventures were invited to the tendering process. On 15 June 2012, financial and technical proposals will be submitted. The planned date for completing this mine clearance activity is within 2016.

The tendering process of the second tender region between Çobanbey and Denizgören, stretching 384 km, will be initiated after the validation of the contract for the first tender region. The planned date for completion in this sector is by the end of 2016.

Madame Co-chair,

While Turkey will be financing mine clearance activities along the Syrian border, the clearance of mines along the Armenian and Iranian borders will be carried out using EU sources to a certain extent.

Mines in areas other than borders are being cleared by Turkish Armed Forces in accordance with priorities determined by the Armed Forces.

On the other hand, legal procedures on the establishment of a National Mine Action Authority and Mine Action Center have been initiated by the Ministry of National Defense.

We shall continue to inform the States Parties on further developments regarding our Article 5 obligations.

Thank you for your attention.