

**STATEMENT BY
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TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT**

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- Geneva, 5 February 2004 -

Madame le Président,

Ma présente intervention revêt une importance particulière pour moi, car ce n'est pas seulement la toute première fois que j'ai l'honneur de vous adresser la parole en tant que Président de la Conférence pour le Désarmement, mais c'est également pour la première fois que j'ai le privilège de présenter une allocution devant la Conférence depuis mon arrivée en tant qu'Ambassadeur et Représentant Permanent de mon pays à Genève. J'y suis arrivé le 5 décembre passé, il y a exactement deux mois jour pour jour, avec le petit amendement que le 5 décembre en question était un vendredi... une coïncidence pourrait-on dire si l'on croyait en coïncidences.

Permettez-moi donc, Madame le Président, de vous féliciter pour votre position ainsi que pour vos efforts constants et dédiés afin d'arriver à un consensus dont nous avons tous besoin pour dépasser le blocage prolongé de notre Conférence.

J'aimerais aussi formuler mon espoir, qui est également celui de la délégation roumaine, que la Conférence puisse enfin recommencer son véritable travail le plus tôt possible, ce qui représente en fait le vrai but pour lequel elle a été créée.

Madame President,

As already announced, my intervention is focused on the results of the Reay Group Workshop on "Progress in meeting the aims of the Ottawa Convention in South Eastern Europe", that took place in Bucharest on 2 - 3 February 2004. I take this opportunity to thank all the participants for their interest and active participation to this event.

My particular appreciation goes to the highly relevant involvement in the debates of Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi of Japan, Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch of Austria, Ambassador Chaiyong Satjipanon of Thailand: all of them found the time and resources to travel to Bucharest, in spite of their busy agendas.

We are also grateful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian De-mining (GICHD) for their financial and logistic support that made the workshop possible.

Madame President,

Romania's initiative to discuss the most relevant aspects of the implementation of the Ottawa Convention in a regional format is part of our national policy and contribution to the international efforts that are meant to eliminate the anti-personnel mines (APLs) and alleviate the sufferings caused by their use.

Action was taken by my Government even before Romania became party to the Convention: a moratorium was imposed on transfer and production of APLs, and our engineering troops took part in de-mining operations that were carried out in peacekeeping missions under UN and NATO mandates in Angola and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Humanitarian medical assistance to mine victims was also provided in the Romanian field hospital units deployed in Angola, Somalia and Kuwait.

Madame President,

I have the pleasure to inform the Conference that the workshop was attended by representatives of the countries of the Reay Group - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, F.Y.R. of Macedonia, Greece, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia; by participants from Austria, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Qatar, Sweden, Thailand and representatives of the European Commission, GICHD, Handicap International - Belgium, International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Trust Fund (ITF), Norwegian People's Aid, UNDP, UNMAS.

The purpose of the workshop was to focus on progress in implementing the Ottawa Convention by the States Parties to it in South Eastern Europe (SEE) having in mind the Convention's First Review Conference. It featured also a joint assessment of challenges in the States Parties' efforts to reach the goals of the Convention.

I would like to highlight several general conclusions of the Bucharest workshop, without insisting on details. We would like to ask the Secretariat

to circulate the Chair's Summary as an official document of the Conference and distribute it to all member and observer states.

One of the major achievements in our region is the significant and steady progress towards the universalization of the Ottawa Convention. In this respect, the South East European countries will report to the "Nairobi Summit on a Mine Free World" that one of the Reay Group objectives has been achieved following the depositing of the instruments of ratification/accession by Serbia and Montenegro on 18 September 2003 and by Greece and Turkey on 25 September the same year.

Another important progress concerns the stockpile destruction process: it has been completed before the deadlines provided for by the Convention - in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Slovenia. The APLs stocks is are planned to be eliminated in Romania by for March 2004, more than one year ahead before the deadline.

Furthermore, stockpile destruction is expected to start this year in Greece, Serbia and Montenegro and Turkey; under these circumstances, the South-East European region would be free of anti-personnel mines stockpiles by 2008, one year before the second Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention.

Madame President,

The workshop approached also the challenges that the South Eastern Europe is facing with respect to victim assistance. Although the situation is positively evolving, much still remains to be done in terms of securing the necessary medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychological and social support and economic reintegration.

More efforts have to be directed for mobilizing resources with a view to balancing the current trend of decreasing funding from the traditional donors community for mine action and victim assistance programs.

Among of the facts frequently referred to was that full implementation of all the provisions of the Convention are essential for a successful achievement of the core objectives, including strict adherence to the transparency reporting measures under Article 7 and enforcing the necessary national

implementation measures, including legal sanctions at national level for non-compliance with/breaches to the provisions of the Convention.

Madame le Président,

Les actions accomplies par les pays de l'Europe de sud-est dans le format du groupe Reay ont permis la réalisation de bien des objectifs de désarmement, de non-prolifération et de contrôle des armes : la capacité d'exercer la paternité régionale, l'importance de la coopération des états, les connexions entre les niveaux nationaux, régionaux et globaux, le partenariat constructif entre les structures gouvernementales et la société civile.

L'une des conclusions qu'on a tout particulièrement soulignée à l'atelier de travail de Bucarest vise le fait que les pays de l'Europe de sud-est peuvent constituer un exemple de bonne performance pour d'autres régions du monde. En effet, ce sont seulement le bon voisinage, la confiance réciproque et l'intérêt commun qui ont permis à notre région d'avancer tout en réalisant les objectifs de l'Accord conclu à Ottawa.

Madame le Président,

En guise de conclusion, je suis intimement persuadé que l'atelier du Groupe Reay de Bucarest a, une fois de plus, certifié de l'engagement réel et efficace de l'Europe de sud-est d'accomplir l'important objectif concernant l'élimination totale des mines anti-personnes établi en 1997 par l'Accord signé à Ottawa.

En espérant que d'autres régions du monde pourraient bénéficier de notre expérience, que nous sommes tous prêts à partager, je vous remercie, Madame le président, pour votre attention.