

Statement 2 by the Republic of Bulgaria

Under CCM 9MSP

Agenda Item 9b. Review of the status and operation of the Convention and other matters important for achieving the aims of the Convention

(b) Storage and Stockpile Destruction

Mr. President/Chair,

(Since this is the first time as the Republic of Bulgaria is taking the floor,) let me reassure you in my country's support for your work and commitment towards the goals of our Convention and in our determination to fulfil all our related obligations.

Mr. Chair,

I. The Republic of Bulgaria ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) in April 2011. It entered into force for our country on October 1, 2011. As we all know, under CCM's provisions, each State Party is obliged to ensure the destruction of all cluster munitions (CMs) as soon as possible but not later than eight years after the entry into force. The deadline for the destruction of the Bulgarian cluster munitions stockpiles is October 1st, 2019. We invested a lot of effort at national level in order to proceed with the fulfilment of our CCM obligation. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, unexpected delays and other internal and external factors, our country will not be able to complete the cluster munitions destruction within the aforementioned deadline.

In this context, in January this year, the Republic of Bulgaria submitted an Extension Request in accordance with the provisions of Art 3 of the Convention by asking for a 18-months extension of the deadline (October 1st 2019) for destruction of our national stockpiles as set out in Art 3 of the Convention.

We would like to express gratitude to the coordinators, Austria and Mozambique, and the members of the Analysis Group and the ISU for assisting us to fine-tune our request.

As the contractor company, which will carry out the destruction of our cluster munitions, was selected only in July 2019, we were not in a position to provide any verifiable and reliable information with regard to finances, timeframes and all other human and administrative resources needed for accomplishing this complex task.

II. Thanks to committed efforts by the Bulgarian institutions in charge, mainly our Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Ministry of Defence (MoD), and in a close and constructive cooperation with the NATO Supply and Procurement Agency (NSPA), as of 24 July 2019, the Italian company "Esplosivi Sabino" concluded a contract with the NSPA for the destruction of cluster munition stockpiles in possession of the Bulgarian Armed Forces.

An estimate of the available financial resources indicates that the current funding at hand will suffice for the destruction of Lot 1 and Lot 2 of the cluster munitions subject to our extension request.

The contractor company tentatively envisaged the deadline for completing the destruction to be by the end of 2020.

The Contract entails provisions allowing for on-site inspections/visits on behalf of the stakeholders being NSPA, the Bulgarian MoD and the MFA. These on-site inspections/visit are envisaged to take place regularly thus allowing our country to provide relevant information to CCM State Parties through the ISU on a regular basis. This is of key importance in terms of ownership and ensuring comprehensive and timely control over the entire process allowing for adequate reactions, if necessary.

Shortly after the commencement of the destruction activities, we will also be in a position to present a detailed plan on the overall destruction process planned and conducted by the implementing company.

III. Bulgaria is in a process of negotiations with the USA in order to obtain additional financial resources for the destruction of the cluster munitions allocated in Lot 3. We are positive that the necessary funding will be secured in due time.

IV. Mr. Chairman, finally yet importantly, the Bulgarian private companies namely "EMKO" and "Expal Bulgaria" successfully completed activities related to the destruction of stockpiles munition in their possession in a verifiable manner.

We appreciate the assistance, the understanding and overall professionalism provided by the ISU and the Members of the Analysis Group under Art 3. It turns to be essential for trust and confidence building.

We would like to thank the Analysis Group for the submission of the Analysis of Bulgaria's request of deadline extension. The proposed draft Decision would be the most suitable scenario, which will allow us to fulfil successfully our obligations under the Convention in the best possible manner given the challenges our country had so far.

We hope that the draft Decision will be acceptable to all of the State Parties of the Convention given that we all share the same goals and values.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman!