



## Conference on Disarmament

1 March 2011

**Address by H.E. Gazmend Turdiu, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania and President of the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

Mr. President, dear colleagues:

I am honoured to address the Conference on Disarmament in my capacity as the President of the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction – the so-called *Ottawa Convention*, or *Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention*.

It is also a great pleasure to be here on this auspicious day – a day when so many high level representatives have travelled to Geneva to address the Conference, and, a day which coincidentally is the twelfth anniversary of the entry into force of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

The Convention's anniversary is an important opportunity to recall why we pursue disarmament negotiations and what benefits we can expect when we conclude and implement high quality outcomes of these negotiations.

Why do we disarm?

We do so for the peace and security of an international order that is based on appreciation of the sovereign responsibility of States for matters that are under their jurisdiction.

Indeed, the most profound sovereign responsibility of a State is to guarantee the rights and to ensure the well-being of its own population.

As such, we should recall the second reason why we disarm:

That is, while we disarm to ensure the peace and security of States, disarmament is also a means to ensure the safety and well-being of people, the prosperity and security of communities and freedom for individual women, men, boys and girls to exercise their rights.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is an embodiment of the complete set of reasons why you sit at this Conference on Disarmament.

But, the concerns related to using anti-personnel mines, bring to our minds two additional reasons why we must remain especially focused on getting rid of this sinister weapon.

**President of the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties**  
c/o AP Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit

First, the indiscriminate and long-lasting nature of anti-personnel mines means their victims are more likely to be civilians than combatants, or more likely to be communities of people rather than battalions of soldiers.

This point was well recognised, more than a decade ago.

Second, the military utility of anti-personnel mines is marginal at best and any such perceived utility is greatly outweighed by their humanitarian impact. In addition, this perceived utility can easily be replaced through means that do not possess the insidious characteristics and long lasting consequences of anti-personnel mines.

This point too, was well recognised more than a decade ago.

Because traditional disarmament and arms control arenas had proven to be inadequate in addressing the concerns related to the anti-personnel mines, as result of the increased awareness and recognition in the mid 1990s that something had to be done about their inhuman nature, the Ottawa Process was born and then the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention came to life.

Exactly 12 years ago today the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction entered into force.

It has since been confirmed as one of the most successful disarmament instruments in history.

The 156 States Parties to the Convention have, to borrow from the Charter of the United Nations, taken "effective collective measures" in order to "maintain international peace and security."

Moreover, each of these individual 156 States is no less secure because it has foresworn the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines, just as each State that has not yet joined our common cause is any more secure because it continues to retain and / or use anti-personnel mines.

Quite simply, this is a weapon that no longer has a place in our international order.

The real measure of success of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, however, rests less in how many States have joined the cause, or how few persist outside of this effort.

Success should be measured in the number of mines destroyed, the amount of land freed from its deadly bondage, and the number of survivors who have increased hope that their needs will be met and their rights respected.

Since the Convention entered into force, States Parties have reported the destruction of almost 44 million mines.

Sixteen (16) of the 54 States Parties with anti-personnel mines in mined areas have now reported the completion of their obligation to render all such areas once again fit for normal human activity.

Moreover, this Convention broke new ground in terms of responsibility to the victims of the weapons that we wish to control or eliminate. It has served as the inspiration for how the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Convention on Cluster Munitions seek to meet the needs and guarantee the rights of victims of conventional weapons.

Mr. President:

In 12 short years, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention has become binding international law for 156 States; I am heartened that more are considering the importance of joining this cause.

At last year's Tenth Meeting of the States Parties, I was delighted to hear that both Finland and Poland intend to ratify or to accede to the Convention in 2012.

And I remain hopeful that the United States of America, with its potential to demonstrate real international leadership, will conclude the review of its landmine policy in such a way that it too, will become part of our collective effort.

Mr. President:

I wish to conclude by noting that the twelfth anniversary of the Convention's entry-into-force is not only a time to mark our achievements.

It is also an opportunity to assess what remains to be done with the three main pillars of this Convention, mine clearance, stockpile destruction and, in particular, victim assistance. While stockpile destruction is progressing well; while more areas are cleared from anti-personnel mines and other unexploded ordnance and then returned to the local communities, we will need to continue and strengthen our support to mine survivors, for as long as they live.

Our aim is not only to provide proper medical assistance and treatment, but also to make it possible for them to reintegrate in the social and economic life of their countries.

Many challenges lie ahead, and we will need to redouble our efforts in order to achieve our common goals.

Our mission is the conclusive end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.

But our mission will only be complete as a result of, first, strengthened national ownership on the part of those States Parties that must still clear mined areas; second, of more intensive efforts as concerns the needs and rights of survivors; and third, of the continuation of our solemn legal obligation to assist one another in implementing the Convention.

Given the track record to date, I am optimistic that this Convention will continue to produce results.

Having this said, I am hopeful that more States will see that this instrument is a case study of multilateralism working the way it should.

This Conference, for instance, may wish to study this example in order to see how the efforts we invested into the work of this august body produce real results – both in the maintenance of international peace and security and in ensuring the safety and well-being of people.

Thank you.