



**REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

STATEMENT

BY

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AT

THE SECOND REVIEW CONFERENCE

GENEVA DECLARATION

ON ARMED VIOLENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

GENEVA, 31 OCTOBER – 1 NOVEMBER 2011

Honorable Mr. President,

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Participants,

On behalf of the Albanian Government, allow me to express my pleasure to be present and address this meeting, which aims to assessing the progress made by the member countries and to reaffirm our commitments to the goals of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development.

I would like to extend my thanks to the Swiss Confederation and to the United Nations Development Program, as the organizers of this important meeting.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Albanian Government which has signed the GD since 2008, remains constantly committed to further contribute for the reduction of the armed violence, its consequences and for the improvement of human security.

We recognize that armed conflict and organized crime has a transnational nature and this is a global issue that we are all affected. This means that we have to work together in order to reduce and prevent armed violence in all its aspects.

Albania is pleased to internationally contribute in the progress made by the member countries at different levels in order to reduce the risks of armed violence and their impact in the development.

Albania supports all the international efforts to address the impacts of armed violence on human security in accordance with existing international commitments, including UN Security Council resolutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to give a short overview on the Albania's achievements in the framework of the Geneva Declaration.

The Albanian Gov is fully committed to support the major goal of GD, which consists in the reduction of the global burden of armed violence for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by the end of 2015.

The Albanian Government has identified that one of main threats for the country's security and economic and social development is the surplus stockpiled ammunition and the small arms and light weapons existing within the country. The spread of these weapons influences on the increase of the organized crime and has a negative impact on the security climate in the country. The Albanian Government has paid continuous attention on these matters and is implementing the necessary measures which aim at their destruction.

In 2009, the Ministry of Defense enacted an Action Plan to completely destroy all excess munitions. Ten demolition ranges were approved by the Albanian Parliament for use as open burning and open detonation sites, which are operated by the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Center in the Albanian Armed Force and are fully funded by the Ministry of Defense. More than 42,000 tons of surplus and dangerous ammunition have already been disposed of from 2009 through September 2011. A further 45,000 tons will be destroyed through the end of 2013.

In addition, in cooperation with UNDP and the International Trust Fund (ITF), Albania carried out an extremely successful program to safely remove 12,452 Anti-Personnel Landmines and 4,965 unexploded ordnances over an area exceeding 16 million square meters. This area has now been returned to the local communities and Albania has received international recognition as a country free of mines and cluster munitions.

In 2007 the Albanian Parliament approved the law on Import-Export of Military Goods and Dual Use Goods. This law provides a legal basis for regulating the brokerage or shipping of arms transfers and for end-use monitoring or verification on the basis of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. Finally, the new law imposes a new legal requirement for dissemination of information on arms transfers to parliament, in the form of a yearly report.

Another important aspect for the Albanian government is the strengthening of capacities of the law enforcement institutions to guaranty public order. The reduction of the unregistered small arms and light weapons is one of the priorities of the Albanian State Police, and the accomplishment of this process requires, among others, the necessary financial funds to be invested in the digitalization of the arms' registration and marking system, as well as the strengthening of cooperation especially in a regional level. The government of Albania is determined to free Albania from the onerous legacy of its past and to create a safe Albania that its citizens may be proud of and which strongly contributes to regional security.

Albania is a part of many regional initiatives on anti-trafficking, border security and organized crime. During these last years, there has been a successful and effective exchange of information on trafficking of small arms and light weapons with all neighboring countries of the region and beyond. The Border Police also cooperate with their equivalent structures in neighboring countries under a number of different protocols, memoranda and agreements in relation to cooperation on anti-trafficking and border management.

As a party to agreements such as the Stability Pact, SALW Regional Implementation Plan, the UN Program of Action on SALW, the OSCE Documents on SALW and Ammunition Stockpiles and more recently by aligning itself to the EU Code of Conduct, Albania has made substantial commitments towards responsible international arms transfer control.

On behalf of the Albanian Gov I take this opportunity to express our engagement to adopt the Draft Outcome Document and to assure this forum for an effective and rapid implementation process of the Geneva Declaration in Albania.

Thank you very much for your attention.