



**Intersessional Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Geneva, 19-20 May 2016**

**STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
ON COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE**

Thank you Mr./Ms. President/Coordinator.

The International Symposium and Equipment Exhibition Mine Action 2016, the annual international gathering of mine action experts, was held under the high patronage of the President of the Republic of Croatia (Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović) from 26th to 29th April 2016 in Biograd. The Symposium drew attendance of 160 participants from 32 countries.

Within five panels during plenary sessions experts discussed the following topics: explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination; risks and safety in demining; new and emerging technologies; cooperation and transfer of knowledge and experience; mine risk education (MRE) activities and mine victims' assistance.

For the first time we have introduced the role of the partner country of the Symposium and this year it was Jordan, whose delegation was led by HRH Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al-Hussein, Chairman of the National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation (NCDR) and Special Envoy of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Delegates from Jordan, namely the Director of the National Center for Demining and Rehabilitation Mr. Mohammad Breikat, held presentations on ERW clearance in the Jordan Valley and on the *train-the-trainer* MRE course, conducted together with the Croatian Center for Testing, Development and Training (CTDT), for Syrian refugees in Jordan; a project financed by the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. I can inform you with pleasure that this particular project will continue in 2016 as well, with new advanced and basic MRE training courses.

The Symposium provided an overview of the latest scientific and practical achievements and offered sustainable solutions in dealing with mines, cluster munitions and ERW in general. Thus, the Workshop of the International Advanced Robotic Program (IARP) was also held, where the latest developments

in the robotics field in mine action were presented. As in previous years, participants used this opportunity to share their experiences, both technological and managerial.

As a practical part of the Symposium, participants attended a demonstration of the dog training school of the Norwegian Peoples' Aid (NPA) (Bosnia and Herzegovina), the Spinator Company (Sweden) with their information management device for application in technical survey and the EBOTLUTION Systems Company (Spain) with their robots and a drone. Croatian CTDT demonstrated the method of training honey bees to detect explosives. Ebinger Company presented their metal detectors and companies DOK-ING (Croatia) and WAY INDUSTRIES (Slovakia) demonstrated their demining machines. Finally, GREENROAD Company (Israel) presented the use of a bucket-sifter.

Participants also greatly valued presentation by the CROMAC experts of a technical survey conducted on a real demining worksite, as well as the demonstration of the underwater survey and demining performed by the Regional Centre for Underwater Demining (Montenegro).

Finally, a number of bilateral meetings were held during the Symposium, including the meeting between high-level military delegation of Colombia and Croatian mine action representatives that resulted in designating Colombia the partner-country of the 14th Symposium in 2017.

Also, the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Mine Action between CROMAC and Centre for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (CHDE) of Armenia was signed, thus making it the highlight of the multi-year successful cooperation. By this Agreement, the parties have committed themselves to mutual support and exchange of knowledge, as well as to defining plans and activities for future cooperation.

Thank you.