

Distinguished Co-Chairs, dear colleagues,

At the outset, let me thank the Co-Chairs for their strong leadership towards the effective implementation of the most important long-term goal of the Convention: comprehensive assistance to landmine survivors to enable their rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration. We are very pleased to see that all 24 States Parties which have indicated responsibility for the well being of significant numbers of landmine survivors, are continuing in their efforts to develop concrete and time-framed victim assistance objectives which will take us up to the next Review Conference in 2009. This valuable work, started by former Co-Chairs of this Committee, Nicaragua and Norway, has already born fruit at the 6 MSP in Zagreb and is continuing to do so, thanks to the efforts of the current Co-Chairs, Switzerland and Afghanistan. Finally, let us not forget the dedicated work of Victim Assistance Specialist with the ISU, Ms. Sheree Bailey in this field. We acknowledge that we have taken advantage of the many worthwhile suggestions received from her regarding our victim assistance objectives up to 2009, especially those prompting us to define in a more specific and measurable manner actions needed for their realization. Our plan, after some additional work on it, was sent to the Co-Chairs and ISU.

In accordance with Action # 38 of the Nairobi Action Plan, “in order to support the effective integration of mine victims into the work of the Mine Ban Convention”, at this Intercessional meeting we have included into our delegation Ms. Mirjana Filipović, a landmine survivor from Slavonski Brod. This is not the first time that we have included a landmine survivor in our delegation; many of you remember Zdravko Miletić and Sandra Crnković who came in Geneva and Nairobi with us. Zdravko was a member of our delegation at the 6MSP in Zagreb. Zdravko is due for another operation in a week so he was not able to come to Geneva and Sanda had a baby boy five months ago. Advised by mutual positive experience, and convinced that it is of great importance that the voices of landmine survivors, their experience and their knowledge – acquired at great cost – be readily available to us as we debate and shape policies regarding them and their future, we have invited Mirjana to work with us in partnership as a member of the Croatian delegation, at least, for this year. Mirjana, I thank you for accepting.

The most important element that we added to our national plan containing victim assistance objectives up to the next Review Conference in 2009, concerns first, the definition of time-frame in which certain actions will be taken, and second, the estimated number of landmine survivors who will benefit from those actions. It

is important to stress that input was requested from all relevant Ministries, governmental bodies and local authorities, as well as NGOs, in the preparation and finalization of this document. This included the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Ministry of Family, Veteran's Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Ministry of Health and Social Care, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice; local authorities, CROMAC and NGOs (especially the Croatian Mine Victim Association and Mine Aid).

Regarding further progress towards the implementation of mine victim assistance objectives, in January 2006 the Croatian Trauma Register Project, whose goal is to ensure that every emergency be registered and every trauma monitored by all hospitals through the country from the moment of occurrence of incident/injury until the rehabilitation and reintegration of the mine victim be ensured. started with the main goal that every emergency situation is registered by hospitals all over the country and trauma monitored from the beginning (incident/injury) until final reintegration.

Regarding integration of victim assistance objectives into the broader health care and social service system, it should be stressed that recently (March 2006) the Government passed a plan relating to the rights of children with special needs and children war victims and those impacted by the consequences of war. The main goal of the National Plan of Activities for Regulating Children Rights and Interests 2006-2012 is to ensure that a thorough needs assessment be completed by the end of 2006 to enable the development of relevant and appropriate psychological support and adequate MRE programs.

Furthermore, in December 2005, the Fund for professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disability (which is based on the Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disability) was established to encourage companies and company owners to employ disabled persons, or to motivate disabled persons towards self-employment, using financial assistance from the State.

Finally, in March 2006, Ms. Vesna Škulić, a member of Parliament and a person with severe physical disability, initiated a campaign for recognition of rights of mothers of disabled children which will necessarily also include the young landmine survivors.

Thank you.