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Statement by

Amb. Branislav Hitka

**Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the Slovak Republic**

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At the 15th 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**

(Ottawa Convention)

Santiago de Chile

(28 November – 2 December 2016)

Santiago de Chile, November 28, 2016

Madam President,

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset Madam President, allow me to congratulate you on your election as the President of the 15th Meeting of the State Parties of the Ottawa Convention and to assure you of the full support of Slovakia. I am looking forward to a constructive meeting.

Also I would like to express my thanks to the Government of Chile for hosting this meeting. It is a great opportunity to take stock of the progress in elimination of the anti-personnel mines and their consequences for humankind and also to agree on concrete steps aimed at full implementation of this Convention.

Slovakia fully associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by Ambassador-Head of the EU Delegation in Santiago de Chile. Nevertheless I would like to add few comments that are of particular interest to my country.

Slovakia firmly believes that international community should continue to work towards full implementation of the goals of the Convention and also of the Maputo Action Plan for the sake of the states and their people affected by anti-personnel mines.

We attach great importance to the universalization of the Ottawa Convention. To achieve the world free of anti-personnel landmines, it is essential to reach out to those states that have not yet committed themselves to the Convention. We should continue to engage them, help them to identify options and possibilities – at least to enable them to adhere to some of existing norms and implement concrete measures. We should also search for further ways how to coordinate all existing efforts to foster this goal.

In this context we fully recognize an inspirational role the civil society has played at the birth of this Convention as well as during its existence so far. We still hope the civil society will be assisting further in encouraging the States Parties to fulfil the goals and obligations of the Ottawa Convention, and also in efforts for universalization of this Convention (attract new states for accession).

Madam President,

Having met our obligations under this Convention, in the area of international cooperation, Slovakia focused its contributions to the areas where we have means and experience and where we are efficient to add substantial added value in the international efforts to ban and eliminate these devastating weapons.

Slovakia possess considerable military and civilian capabilities in the field of mine-clearance, destruction of stocks of mines and other explosive devices, where emphasis is given to use of environmentally friendly methods of disposal.

In the previous years, demining activities of Slovak troops, mainly in Afghanistan and Iraq, considerably contributed to the mine action. For several years, the Centre of Excellence for Explosive Ordnance Disposal has been in operation. This entity is able to provide teams to international humanitarian operations where explosive ordnance disposal is needed.

For the last 2-3 years, Slovakia have been more engaged in the international assistance by providing theoretical and practical courses aimed at improvement of knowledge and skills in the areas of manual demining, capabilities in removing and disposal of unexploded ordnance (EOD) and improvised explosive devices (IED).

Also this year Slovakia declared a leading role in a Trust Fund to assist Ukraine in the area of demining and removal of IED/EOD. Now the preparatory work is going on and, at this stage, we have indications of potential contributors to this Trust Fund from several Ottawa Convention States Parties – Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Spain, Sweden and Turkey. This Fund will help Ukraine and above all its citizens to address the consequences of the crisis in the region in mine clearance, removal and disposal of unexploded ordnance, improvised incendiary means and landmines.

Madam President,

In conclusion I would like to express my appreciation to the hospitality of the Government of Chile and special thanks – not only to all involved in the organization of this 15th Meeting of the State Parties – but also to the UNODA and the APLC Implementation Support Unit (ISU) for the regular assistance to the APLC States Parties in the efforts to clean the world from these harmful devices.

Thank you for your attention.