

CROATIA

Dear Co-Chairs, esteemed colleagues,

Since this is the last time that we see the distinguished representatives of Jordan and Slovenia in their role as the Co-Chairs of the Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies, we would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation for the hard work they have put into the proper functioning of this Committee and, consequently, the Convention as a whole. We are especially grateful for the comprehensive, yet, straightforward and concrete, questions the Co-Chairs suggested to the States Parties in the process of fulfilling Article 5 mine clearance obligation, in order to facilitate their presentations on the issue. We acknowledge that, to a large extent, we made use of this tool and it certainly helped our preparations for the meetings in this year.

Since in our intervention at the 6th Meeting of the States Parties in Zagreb we reported extensively on our plans and priorities regarding the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under Croatian jurisdiction or control, as well as on the work that remains to be done in order to fulfill this obligation (including detail break down of the structure of mined land) we will not elaborate on this issue here again. Equally so, since at the last Intercessional Meeting in May of this year, we reported on the most recent developments regarding demining in Croatia and the legal framework accompanying it, we will not enter into that issue here again.

Having in mind the request issued by the Co-Chairs to strictly confine ourselves to new information we would like to stress the following:

- between January and September 2006, 5,127.478 square meters were cleaned of mines, while 10.316.344 square meters were released through technical survey. During aforementioned activities, 885 antipersonnel mines, 442 anti vehicle mines and 3 957 unexploded ordnances were found.

- Demining and technical survey capacities in Croatia consists of the following: 30 commercial companies and one NGO (Norwegian People's Aid) employing 616 deminers, using 55 demining machines and 123 mine detection dogs.

- by September 1 of this year, about 23.6 million Euros were spent for demining and mine search activities in Croatia. The major funding source for mine action in Croatia is the State Budget (some 15.1 million Euros), followed by public and state owned companies (Croatian Roads, Croatian Waters, Croatian Railways, Croatian Forests, etc., some 3.8 million Euros), foreign governments, organizations and individual donors

(some 4.7 million Euros) and, finally, World Bank loans. As we have already informed the States Parties on many occasions, the State Budget has the largest financing share with some 50% of total funds spent and contracted: this means that some 80% of all funds for demining and mine search activities in Croatia come from Croatian sources.

Finally, I would like to conclude this brief intervention by reiterating the concern we expressed at the last Intercessional in May, regarding the future demining process in Croatia: "Since the capacities for mine action, as mentioned, are well developed, the financing of the demining activities is recognized as the main precondition for fulfillment of Croatia's obligations regarding the Mine Ban Treaty. In that sense, possible decline of the interest of major donors, especially of the Croatian public companies, which could quite logically follow after the completion of demining of the areas of interest to them, in addition to the decline in interest of international donors (like the World Bank and the EU) after completion of demining of populated areas and related projects, is to be expected. Having that in mind, we predict the donor fatigue to be the major threat to the demining process in our country."

Thank you.