



**15th MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE
ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION**
Santiago, 28th November – 1st December 2016

**STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE**

Thank you Mr. President. / Mr./Ms. Coordinator.

As this is the first time that the Delegation of the Republic of Croatia is taking the floor, I would like to congratulate you and your able team for the extensive and excellent work that you have undertaken in preparing the 15th Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (15MSP APMBC). I can assure you of my delegation's full support in your endeavor as the President of this Meeting and I am confident that under your competent stewardship this Meeting will be safely steered to a sound and successful outcome. I also wish to thank all members of the Committees for their hard and effective work so far and finally, I take this opportunity to commend the work of the Implementation Support Unit, its Director and staff on their job and services, and in particular, for being the good spirit of our Convention.

Mr. President, / Mr./Ms. Coordinator,

In 2016, victim assistance was carried out in accordance with legal regulations by government organizations (GOs) and non-government organizations (NGOs) under the overseeing role of the Government Office for Mine Action (GOMA).

NGO "Mine Aid" continued supporting persons affected by mines and members of their families through psychosocial and economic projects. They implemented the project "Knowledge – Opportunity - Sinergy" in the mine-contaminated Sisak-Moslavina County. The project included population from affected communities: unemployed women aged 30 - 65 years and youth aged 15 - 29 years, which are also beneficiaries of social welfare, living in deprived areas, are members of ethnic minorities, PwDs, victims of domestic violence etc. The overall objective was to foster employment growth of the unemployed youth and women from Sisak-Moslavina County into their respective local communities through provision of professional holistic support and preparation for their access to labor market. The implementation of this multi-faceted project resulted in over

800 counseling sessions for 83 beneficiaries; conduction of workshop „Building and Strengthening Personal and Professional Capacities and Skills” with 8 different teams for 60 beneficiaries; 1 training „Start your Business“ for 60 beneficiaries; 4 certified educational programs for 61 beneficiaries; organization of practical-volunteer work for 42 beneficiaries in 25 different local organizations; 10 business plans for beneficiaries; and most importantly, it resulted in over 40 employments during project implementation.

The Sitting Volleyball Club "Zagreb" in cooperation with other sitting volleyball clubs in Croatia and civil society partners continued their campaign "Together for Croatia without Mines" by staging promotional games in town squares or school sport halls in mine-affected counties showing that this is indeed a sport that can be successfully practiced by people injured by mines. Particular value of this activity is the fact that the entire campaign was designed and implemented by persons with disabilities (PwDs). Evaluation of the program showed that the campaign contributes significantly to the development of sitting volleyball in Croatia and increases the number of members in the club who were involved in the program. Also, test results conducted among the population in mine-affected areas have shown that such campaigns significantly contribute to increasing public awareness about the dangers of mines.

The Government Office for Mine Action, Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC), Ministry of Interior and State Protection and Rescue Directorate (SPRD) in cooperation with a number of non-government organizations (Croatian Red Cross, „Mine Aid”, SVC Zagreb, Trust Fund „Croatia without Mines”, Association for the Support and Encouragement of Unity "Croatia's Help" and Association of Special Police Forces' Veterans) jointly marked 4th April – International Day of Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action in Gospić, capital of Lika-Senj County, the most mine-affected county in Croatia.

The 4th April program included participation of a number of schools from this county, a mine risk education (MRE)-oriented theatre play „Bembo and Friends”, showcasing of mine clearance with mine detectors and mine detection dogs and distribution of educational materials on mine threat that still exists in Croatia. MRE education activities involving a number of stakeholders were continued throughout Croatia thus marking April as the Mine Awareness Month.

Thank you.