

Madame Co-Chair, distinguished colleagues, dear friends,

It is a great pleasure to see you in the chair, presiding over this topic of the utmost importance to us all. You can count on the fullest possible support of my delegation in the discharge of your duties and responsibilities.

In our interventions at previous meetings during the Interessionals here in Geneva, but also elsewhere, especially, in Nairobi, we have elaborated on many points pertaining to the issue of mine clearance, mine risk education and mine action technologies. Having that in mind, my intention today is to be as brief as possible and to inform you only of the newest developments regarding mine clearance and related activities in my country.

1. The Croatian National Action Plan for 2005-2009, the successor to the 2000-2004 plan, will be presented to the Parliament for the approval and adoption before the summer recess in mid July. The Plan contains a comprehensive discussion of previous mine action activities in Croatia, including the development of the Croatian model of organization and definition of mine suspected areas, review of the financing of mine action activities and development of capacities for demining, mine risk education and victim assistance and rehabilitation. In addition, the Plan describes the current situation in Croatia regarding mine suspected areas, the available capacities for mine action and the main goals to be achieved in the 2005-2009 period. Finally, it articulates the preconditions and means for realization of the goals set, especially the time frame for their achievement, the necessary funds, the available capacities, as well as, the normative and organizational prerequisites required for its successful execution.

2. Implementation of the 2000-2004 National Action Plan has led to the precise definition of mine suspected areas and to their significant reduction, as well as an overall decrease in incidents related to mines and, consequently, decrease in mine victims.

3. The methodological problem of determining mine suspected area is obviously the crucial point from which all mine clearance related activity must start. In the early post war days, a purely mathematical method had been used which did not provide an accurate picture. After some time, we introduced the method of general and technical survey developed by CROMAC. Today, this model is based on directives and guidelines of international mine action standards which guide CROMAC in the general assessment, general and technical survey, projecting and quality control.

4. On the basis of comprehensive analyses of all relevant information and general survey on the ground, the 2005-2009 the Plan established that mine suspected area in Croatia consists of 1 174 square kilometers, that is 2,08% of our territory. The biggest share of mine suspected area belongs to the forests – 633,4 square kilometers or 54 % of all mine suspected area, followed by agricultural land – 201,1 square kilometers or 17, 1 % of all mine suspected area, after and rocky land and macchia – 131,9 square kilometers. Meadows and pasture lands compose – 108,8 square kilometers or 9,3% of all mine suspected area, followed by houses and house lots – 13,2 square kilometers or 1,1% of all mine suspected area. Finally, some - 77,6 square kilometers or 6,6% of all mine suspected areas is classified as miscellaneous.

6. To date CROMAC has recorded 247 287 mines, of which 89 043 are anti-vehicle mines and 157 244 are anti-personnel mines.

7. The structure of mine suspected area according to the ways in which demining is carried out is divided into the following:

- areas in need of demining, where there is concrete evidence pointing to contamination of certain area – 302,752 square meters or 26 % of all mine suspected area;

- areas where we have reason to suspect that there may be – 833.803 square meters or 71 % of all mine suspected area;

- areas known to be mined but demined by the land owners or other persons who are not qualified deminers – 37,514 or 3% of all mine suspected area.

8. Currently, in the Republic of Croatia there are 27 registered demining companies, one NGO (Norwegian Peoples Aid) and one Government firm MUNGOS. There are no foreign demining companies active at the moment in Croatia. There is total of 610 deminers, 45 demining machines, 677 metal detectors and 136 trained dogs. These capacities if used to their full potential are could demine 61,5 square kilometers of suspected area per year and with increased rationalization, they could reach the level of 75 square kilometers per year.

9. Victim assistance and rehabilitation in Croatia is mainly organized and conducted by NGOs in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The main forms of assistance are financial (especially for orthopedic aids, school fees, additional education), as well as in employment, legal assistance and psychosocial rehabilitation. The last is cared out jointly with the Croatian Red Cross through regional advisers, members of Croatian association of mine victims. Finally, activities carried out in the Regional rehabilitation center for children mine victims in Rovinj are .

10. The main source of funding for demining in Croatia has been the State budget (60%), Croatian state enterprises and public companies (16%) and loans from the World Bank (13 %). This means that almost 85% of all funds for demining are secured by the Republic of Croatia and that only some 15 % of mine action moneys come from foreign (mostly government) donations. Nevertheless, Croatia also continues to value assistance from CARDS and PHARE programs, as well as continued support from foreign donors.

Although Croatia firmly believe that it is the responsibility of mine affected countries to take charge of this process of mine action to the fullest of their ability – we also know and wish to remind the mine free countries that, under the Convention, it is as much their responsibility to contribute to the fulfillment of the Convention obligations, both through financial aid, as well as through their joint programs of capacity building. Finally, it is in our mutual interest, whether mine affected or mine free, to meet the goals of the Convention, since for all of us to be mine-safe, we must become mine free.