

MR. ED BATLAK, REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

Mr. President,

As we carefully listened to the presentations of the States Parties as well as Non States Parties, and mine clearance updates in particular, we can conclude that this was a fairly successful year in the area of humanitarian demining. At the same time, these reports gave us an indication of how much hard and dedicated work is still ahead of us.

We are honored by the presence and participation of the two leading military powers in the world. Republic of Croatia would like to express its sincere gratitude to the government of the United States for the substantial contributions made in the humanitarian demining and other related projects, not only in Croatia, but also other affected countries in our region. We are delighted to see the delegation of the Russian Federation actively participating and showing interest in this Convention. It is with sincere hopes and appreciation that we await their arrival to our family of States Parties. Ottawa Convention is one of the Conventions that truly does have an immediate humanitarian impact on the ground.

Mr. President, allow me to say few words about the ICBL and their member organisations, as well as the ICRC and their contribution to this Convention. We often refer to them as the policeman or the controller of the implementation process, while in reality they are the „good guys“ here. Their constructive criticism is often followed by series of recommendations and possible solutions to a problem. Although, Croatia has been a subject to their concern on a few occasions, we very much support their work as their efforts provide added value, strength and integrity to this Convention. We are confident that their factual and straightforward analysis will continue to keep us, the States Parties, focused on our goals and objectives.

As for the work of the ISU, Mr. President, their entire team has very quietly, in a low profile manner done an excellent job supporting you in a conduct of this meeting and all of the previous activities of this Convention. Therefore, Croatia supports the ISU Task Force final report and its recommendations as presented by you Mr. President.

And finally we congratulate you and your staff on excellent work done this week, as well as your country for the impressive achievements and dedication in implementing the Convention, and we wish you all much success in future endeavours.