

**16th Meeting of the State Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**  
**18 – 21 December 2017, Vienna, Austria**  
**Statement by Slovakia**

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you for assuming the Presidency of the Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and to wish you and the entire Presidency a successful conduct and outcome of this meeting. Please rest assured of the full and strong support of Slovakia. I also would like to convey our gratitude to the Government of Austria for hosting this meeting and sincerely thank all those who tirelessly contributed towards this end.

Slovakia fully aligns itself with the statement (*to be*) delivered by the distinguished representative of the European Union. In addition, I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. President,

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signature and adoption of the Ottawa Convention. The last two decades undoubtedly prove that this Convention has had a far-reaching impact on the worldwide use, transfer and production of anti-personnel mines, bringing about significant positive results on the ground, saving countless human lives and fostering conditions to address victims' needs more systematically.

On this important occasion, Slovakia reiterates its strong conviction that the international community should continue its sustained and tireless efforts towards full and effective implementation of the goals of the Convention as well as of the 2014 Maputo Action Plan for the sake of the states and their people affected by anti-personnel mines. This remains one of the main priorities in the area of human security and disarmament as well as a crucial task aimed at fulfilling the aspiration of achieving an anti-personnel mine free world without new victims by 2025.

Slovakia also shares the view on the need to accelerate the progress of the Convention towards its universalization. To achieve a world free of anti-personnel mines, it is essential to reach out to those states that have not yet committed themselves to the Convention. We should continue to engage them as well as to explore further means how to coordinate all existing efforts to advance this goal.

Mr. President,

Despite the achieved progress, many challenges remain and new threats - including new widespread contamination by anti-personnel mines, improvised anti-personnel mines and other related improvised explosive devices - emerge. To confront them successfully, we need to face them with renewed determination and enhanced international support.

Slovakia has been, for more than a decade now, actively engaged in international cooperation and assistance. Demining activities of Slovak troops, mainly in Afghanistan and Iraq, have

considerably contributed to the mine action. Most recently - given the current challenges and threats, we have been focusing on providing theoretical and practical courses aimed at enhancing knowledge and skills as well as capabilities on removing and disposal of anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordnance (EOD) and improvised explosive devices (IED).

In 2016, Slovakia became a lead nation in the Counter-IED/EOD Trust Fund for Ukraine. The main aim of this Trust Fund is to assist Ukraine and above all its citizens to address the consequences of the protracted crisis in the region through removing unexploded ordnance and disposal of improvised incendiary devices and improvised anti-personnel mines. Following the finalization and approval of all relevant project documents, we expect the implementation phase consisting of training at the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Centre in Trenčín, Slovakia, to commence at the beginning of 2018.

Mr. President,

To conclude, let me assure you that Slovakia remains fully committed to pursuing the objectives and supporting the compliance with the key provisions of the Convention. We stand ready to continue to help, assist and work closely with other State Parties, regional and international organizations, NGOs and other relevant partners in promoting and achieving the universalization and full implementation of the Ottawa Convention.

Thank you for your attention.