



16th Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Vienna, 18 – 21 December 2017

**STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
ON UNIVERSALIZATION**

Thank you Chairperson.

At the outset, allow me to thank you personally, Mr. President, and Austria for your active and tireless engagement and efforts in promoting the universality of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC).

Croatia aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) sets up a strict set of rules for banning the inhumane weapon and has been seen as a crucial contributor to the strengthening of the International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The total number of States Parties to the treaty has now reached 162, which is approximately 84% of all UN member states. However, it is also a fact that 35 states still remain outside of the APMBC, which is why Croatia continues to encourage states that have not yet done so, to join this Convention without further delay. Abiding by the Convention's norms is getting more important and more relevant as we are witnessing the high numbers of casualties for the second year in a row, which is largely due to the rising use of victim-activated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) acting as antipersonnel mines.

Croatia also recognizes the important role that civil society continues to play maintaining the momentum established when this Convention came into force. Here we salute the historic role played by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) in creation of this Treaty and applaud their life-saving work which has not stopped ever since. Their determination in pushing for the mine ban, rightfully earned them and their coordinator, Ms. Jody Williams, the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize.

We too see particular relevance of the annual Landmine Monitor Report, as well as the Mine Action Review, both of which came to become indispensable resources enabling the international community to measure progress and inform how to address the remaining landmine challenges.

The adherence of all states to this humanitarian treaty remains a clear priority for Croatia. In the year we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the APMBC, we will continue our universalization efforts by seizing every opportunity to promote the Convention and its norm in order to stop the use of landmines and improvised landmines as a weapon in armed conflicts around the globe, thus saving not only innocent lives but our common humanity.

We are therefore proud that Croatia, as a strong proponent of multilateralism, held the "Conference on the 20th Anniversary of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention: From the Ottawa Process Toward a Mine Free World" in October in Zagreb this year. The conference, organized by the Government Office for Mine Action (GOMA), the RACVIAC – Centre for Security Cooperation and the Embassy of Canada in Croatia, was attended by 120 participants who benefitted from the experience and discussions of the most prominent actors in the field of mine action and humanitarian disarmament¹.

The purpose of the Conference, besides marking 20 years of the APMBC, was to provide a forum for discussion on the status and progress since its entry into force and its historical impact on the global humanitarian and security architecture; to examine the role and the importance of cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organizations in the development of an effective multilateral instrument; to discuss and evaluate the opportunities and challenges that fall within the scope of political commitment and expressed aspiration to meet the goal of “Mine-Free World by 2025”.

In closing, we would like to reiterate our utmost respect and appreciation to the Special Envoys for the Convention, namely, Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium, and His Royal Highness Prince Mired of Jordan, for their long-standing dedication and contribution to a world free of mines.

Thank you.

¹Namely, one of the architects of the Convention, Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada and the Nobel Peace Prize Nominee; the current Austrian Presidency; the GICHD and the ISU Directors; representatives of ICRC, ICBL, ITF Enhancing Human Security and NPA; Croatian NGOs working with mine survivors and survivors themselves.