

Statement by Croatia  
Agenda Item 11.B – Victim Assistance  
19 September 2006

Madam President, dear colleagues,

At the outset, let me thank the Co-Chairs, Afghanistan and Switzerland, for their strong leadership during the past year, but also for their continuation of efforts undertaken by the former Co-Chairs, Nicaragua and Norway. The endeavor of both, the current and the former Co-Chairs to help the 24 States Parties with the largest number of mine victims to develop specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound victim assistance objectives by the next Review Conference in 2009, has proved to be needed and important.

In the same vein, we would like to commend the dedicated work of the ISU and its Victim Assistance Specialist who have spared no effort in sharing their expertise and knowledge to help the aforementioned 24 States Parties to establish adequate national plans for achieving set objectives.

As we have stated on many occasions, and as we continuously strive to prove by our actions at the national level, the rights of all mine victims through their physical and psycho-social rehabilitation and their socio-economic reintegration, is, we are deeply convinced, the most important long-term goal and the very essence of this Convention.

In accordance with Action # 38 of the Nairobi Action Plan which calls for "the effective integration of mine victims into the work of the Mine Ban Convention", at this Meeting of the States Parties we have included into our delegation Ms. Mirjana Filipović, a landmine survivor from Slavonski Brod. Many of you present here, know that this is not the first time that we have done so, nor will it be our last. I believe that we all agree that it is of utmost importance that the voices of landmine survivors, their experience and their knowledge – acquired at great cost – be heard and taken into account as we debate and shape policies regarding them and their future.

Similarly, the voices of the mine survivors must be heard within their countries, if the necessary social changes to enable their full reintegration is to occur. With that in mind, we organized a capacity building seminar for the regional coordinators of the Croatian Mine Victim Association. For ten days some 9 people attended 4-5 hours to enable them to work more effectively in their own localities with other mine survivors. Topics such as organizing and running a local office, raising mine awareness, conceptualizing and writing various project proposals, etc. were covered in the workshops led by an experience team leader otherwise engaged by

US AID to work with regional officials on government decentralization.

At the last Intercessional Meeting in May 2006, we reported at length on issues relevant to us and articulated by the Co-Chairs in their questionnaire. These were:

- first, on our national plan regarding victim assistance objectives up to the next Review Conference in 2009;

- second, on the work of all relevant ministries, governmental bodies and local authorities that were included into the preparation of our national plan;

- third, on the legal framework within which victim assistance objectives will be realized;

- fourth, on a number of projects that we launched in Croatia this year in order to implement or help the implementation of our national plan.

For the above information we refer all interested delegations to our intervention at the last Intercessional Meeting in May this year.

Finally, we want to inform you briefly of the most recent numbers regarding anti-personnel mine incidents in Croatia in 2006. There were 6 mine incidents with 9 mine victims, 7 civilians and 2 military. Among them 1 person was killed, 3 were heavily injured and 5 suffered light physical injuries.

Thank you, Madam President.