

**ADDRESS BY ASSISTANT MINISTER MR. TOMISLAV VIDOŠEVIĆ AT THE  
HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE FIRST REVIEW CONFERENCE OF  
THE OTTAWA CONVENTION IN NAIROBI**

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, and last, but certainly not least, dear friends, survivors and activists,

We are gathered here in Nairobi at the first review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their destruction, to take stock of the implementation of the Convention, as well as to reaffirm our commitment regarding its future. The documents that we have been discussing, writing and amending for these past many months, have laid a solid ground for the conclusions reached and for our future actions.

At the beginning, it should be stressed that the Mine Ban Treaty does represent a unique example of cooperation between governments, civil society and international organizations – a cooperation which, without any doubt, should serve as an inspiration in other international forums and negotiations on important humanitarian and disarmament issues.

Indeed, as States Parties we do have a reason to be more than satisfied with the work done and accomplishments achieved. However, at the same time, we do realize that ahead of us still lie many challenges and that each and every one of us has an important role to play in the coming five year period.

Let me express our satisfaction with the fact that 143 States have thus far joined the Convention, that new accessions are on the way, and that an additional 9 States have signed it. This represents some 75% of all States and undoubtedly marks an important point on the road to universalisation of the Mine Ban Treaty. However, we can not disregard the reality that a certain number of key states are still outside of the Convention and that we must spare no effort to make them join us as soon as possible.

Regarding mine clearance, it must be noted that the only way to stop permanently the terror induced by the presence of landmines is to remove all the existing ones and to ensure that no new mines can be planted. Only when all mine polluted areas are mine free will all of us be safe. For that reason, it is necessary that all States Parties unite in an effort to reach the goal of a mine free world. Here we especially would like to recall Article 6 of the Convention regulating international cooperation and assistance. Accordingly, we salute all regional initiatives aimed at simplifying procedures and increasing efficiency and coordination among neighbours and thus stimulating potential donors. The CORE group initiative for Eastern Europe represents a perfect example of the aforementioned cooperation which the Republic of Croatia supports wholeheartedly.

Victim assistance, rehabilitation and their reintegration in all spheres of social and economic life, is, by far, the most important long term goal of this Convention. Having had the privilege of co-chairing the Committee on Victim Assistance for the past year, we would like to put forth two proposals whose implementation, we believe, would enhance the work of the Committee and advance the goals of the Convention. First, we would like to propose that a landmine survivor be added as

permanent adviser to the Co-Chairs of the Committee on Victim Assistance as an additional mechanism which would bring to the Committee first hand experience and additional needed knowledge. Secondly, Croatia would like to propose that every State Party includes as part of its delegation a mine survivor or a person with disability. This would, in our opinion, increase the credibility of the Convention, and would serve to enhance the sometime less than excellent cooperation between civil society, international organizations and governments.

Finally, regarding stockpile destruction, we would like to note with satisfaction that this process has thus far proceeded in a timely fashion and to express our hope that it will continue so in the future.

Lastly, dear colleagues, let me thank you for the trust that you have shown Croatia and the honor that you have extended to our country by designating it as host of the Sixth Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention. We wish to thank our hosts once again, for the memorable opening ceremony and for the warm welcome which was extended throughout our stay in Nairobi. We look forward to the 2005 Meeting of States Parties, to this enhanced opportunity to contribute to the realization of the Mine Ban Treaty, and we trust that by working together in Dubrovnik and beyond, we will ensure the full realization of the goals of the Convention.

The only way to be mine safe is to be mine free.

Thank you.