

**Statement by His Excellency Gordan Markotič, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Croatia, on behalf of the President of the Sixth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

**Conference on Disarmament  
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Mr. President, distinguished colleagues,

At the outset let me express our satisfaction at seeing you, Mr. President, in the chair, and, at the same time, our sincere conviction that, together with the other five Presidents of this year's session, you will guide this august forum in the resumption of its work and steer it towards regaining its unique position in the world of disarmament and arms control.

Mr. President,

On Wednesday last, that is on March 1, we celebrated the seventh anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Broadly speaking, the Mine Ban Convention is in a very good shape. This we owe very much to our capable predecessor in the president's chair – Austria, i.e. Ambassador Petritsch and his qualified team, who, without fail, guided our efforts towards mine free world in the last year. During our presidency, we do our best to continue along the same path towards the achievement of our common goals.

As most of you know, this Convention is a product of the unique partnership between governments and civil society. Having that in mind we commend primarily ICBL and ICRC for their efforts in bringing this Convention into the life and, lead by this and other similar examples, would also like to support a stronger engagement of the civil society in the work of this esteemed body. No doubt, the Mine Ban Convention represents a sprinkling of multilateralism in the hard times of its twilight.

Mr. President, distinguished colleagues,

Let me now inform you of the latest figures and developments in the life of the Mine Ban Convention. Some three quarters of the world's states are Parties to the Convention (149) and there are signs that in the nearest future - by the next Meeting of the States Parties that will be held this September in Geneva – a few others will join. Although 45 countries have not yet signed the Convention, it is important to stress that the Convention has established a new international norm which is equally observed by majority of the States that, for a variety of reasons, have not (yet) joined the Convention, but nevertheless see the merit in its application. As a result of these developments, the use of anti-personnel mines has been significantly reduced, their production is increasingly slowing down and the trade in this weapon has almost completely ceased. Additionally, the States Parties to the Convention have had great success in the destruction of stockpiled mines, strictly respecting in that regard stockpile destruction deadlines enshrined in the Convention. Furthermore, having in mind the rapidly approaching 2009 mine clearance deadline for the first States that joined the Convention, it is noteworthy that this most important short term goal of the Convention is taking apace. And finally, and most importantly, the victims of this horrifying weapon are

receiving far better care, while the annual number of new victims is considerably lessened compared to only few years ago.

Mr. President, distinguished colleagues,

As most of you know, the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention, was held from 28 November to 2 December 2005, in Zagreb, Croatia. It was the first meeting to be held following the First Review Conference – the Nairobi Summit on a Mine Free World – and, as such, its prime task was to evaluate the implementation of the first year of the Nairobi Action Plan - a forward looking document adopted in Nairobi, consisting of 70 concrete actions which are to guide efforts of States Parties "towards ending, for all people, for all time, the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines". At the same time, the task in front of the States Parties in Zagreb was to set forth priorities and goals for the coming year, as well as to ensure that the momentum necessary to carry States Parties up to the Second Review Conference in 2009 is maintained. This evaluation of implementation and forward-looking set of priorities were contained in the main outcome of the 6th Meeting of the States Parties – the *Zagreb Progress Report*.

Since many of you were in Zagreb, I will not enter into a detailed recapitulation of what has been accomplished since the First Review Conference. However, please allow me to briefly bring you up to date:

- In terms of universalisation of the Convention, since the 2004 Nairobi Summit, 5 additional States have ratified or acceded to the Convention, bringing to 149 the number of States which have formally joined the Convention. Most recently, Ukraine deposited its instrument of ratification (27th December last year) and Haiti did the same on 15th February of this year.

- Regarding stockpiles, at the close of the Nairobi Summit, 16 States Parties had not yet completed the destruction of stockpiled mines. Most recently, Algeria completed its destruction programme. There are now only 14 States Parties which have not yet completed the destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines

- As for demining, since the Nairobi Summit, Suriname has indicated that it had fulfilled its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention to clear all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control. In addition, at the 6MSP, Guatemala announced that it too had achieved this milestone, becoming the sixth State Party reporting to have done so.

- Finally, in terms of victim assistance, many of the 24 States Parties that have reported significant numbers of landmine survivors spent much of 2005 developing concrete and time-bound victim assistance objectives to guide their efforts in rehabilitation and reintegration of landmine survivors.

Mr. President,

Meeting security challenges as set forth in the Mine Ban Convention requires all States Parties to place at the forefront two main concepts – responsibility and cooperation. This two notions, not only make the backbone of this Convention, but also should form the cornerstone of sound international relations, especially in the field of disarmament and arms control. As sovereign States, States Parties to the Convention are responsible for what happens within their borders and that includes, above all, the well-being of all their citizens. In the context of the Mine Ban Treaty, this means that States Parties like Croatia, which have reported mined areas and a significant number of mine victims, are ultimately responsible for ensuring the rehabilitation and reintegration of mine survivors, as well as for clearing all

mines under their jurisdiction or control. At the same time, it is not to forget, that, according to Article 6 of the Convention, those states in a position to do so should provide the necessary assistance to those mine affected states who need it. The hundreds-of-millions of dollars that have been generated in recent years for mine action are a testament to the degree to which donor states have lived up to their task. Nevertheless, though substantial, it is obvious that the funds generated up to now have not been sufficient. Mine affected countries lack the necessary resources for all mine action activities, particularly for mine removal which is the most important short term goal of the Convention. It is to meet this most expensive obligation and most pressing problem that all States Parties face, as the mine clearance deadline of March 1, 2009 approaches for the first States that joined the Convention, that renewed efforts must be taken.

Finally, Mr. President, we believe that all states with security high on their agendas are responsible for working towards the goals set forth in the Convention. We must not forget that it is a joint responsibility of mine free states and mine contaminated states alike – as states Parties to the Convention – to give as much as possible of their financial, technical and educational resources to rid our world of anti-personnel land mines. Only by accepting joint responsibility and by working in cooperation will we achieve our goal – a more secure world, free of antipersonnel mines.

Let me conclude by stating that it is our strong conviction that the CD could also benefit from this spirit of responsibility and cooperation present amongst States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention and break out of the deadlock in which it has find itself for the past eight years.

Thank you.