



Statement of the Republic of Croatia on victim assistance

Eighth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Geneva, 3 – 5 September 2018

Thank you Mr. President.

Allow me to inform this distinguished meeting about the current developments in the project “Demining and Socio-economic Integration” which is funded by Switzerland within the wider framework of the Swiss-Croatian Cooperation Program. The total budget of the project is 3.53 million CHF out of which 3 million is Swiss contribution and 500.000 is national co-financing.

In short, the project consists of two complementary components, which represent two key pillars of mine action in general – humanitarian demining and victim assistance.

The first segment of the project - the demining of heavily mined and dangerous area of the Kotar Forest in the Sisak-Moslavina County (the second most mine-contaminated county in Croatia) is drawing to its end. The demining of Kotar Forest was a precondition to ensure safety and security of the civilian population in the area, as well to restart full economic exploitation of the said forest.

Second, the program of socio-economic empowerment of mine victims will be carried out and implemented through the establishment of a comprehensive database and needs assessment of mine victims and direct support of mine victims through different programs that will help increase employability and competitiveness in the labor market. These activities will be implemented to the whole area of the Republic of Croatia that has been affected by the Homeland War.

The implementation of the project activities will last for 48 months. While the demining component will be completed rather quickly, the socio-economic empowerment will be conducted in the longer run due to the comprehensive approach that will be applied, involving a broader frame of actors in order to

integrate victim assistance into structural frameworks, which will ensure assistance is being provided to people on the ground. This network will include relevant ministries (health care, war veterans, social welfare etc.), as well as public institutions (ombudsman for persons with disabilities, national employment service, institute for public health, pension insurance institute etc.).

That said, we are currently finalizing the “Questionnaire on Mine Victim” which will be used to conduct the survey among mine survivors and/or their family members. The interviews of mine victims, which will then be used to fill in the database, are foreseen to begin by the end of 2018. At the same time, we are continuing with the development of the concept of victims’ database with particular attention to the requirement on how to deal with sensitive issues.

Thank you.